Battling Over Beer

Sounds Like Oscar

Brutal End for U.S. Agitator

The Beaver

CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

April | May 2009

Canada's ROSA PARKS

How Viola Desmond stood up to racism and became a civil rights icon.

Wanda Robson holds a portrait of her older sister, Viola Desmond.

Lost Soldier Found • B.C.'s Pacific Jewel • Local History Heroes

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GENUINE CANADIAN MAGAZINE

The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Canada

Living history

It was a crisp winter day in Winnipeg, and Fort Gibraltar was abuzz as visitors at the Festival du Voyageur enjoyed a host of historical activities. Ice carvers were finishing their frosty creations, while nearby, two women swathed in woollen dresses were tending to an outdoor fire and cooking pemmican.

As I walked with my family through the old North West Company fort — located on the Red River in the largely francophone community of Saint Boniface — I noticed a crowd gathering along the aspen-lined riverbank.

Suddenly, gunshots rang out. My son and I scrambled down the embankment to investigate — and were transported back in time.

Before us, two bands of men were engaged in a firefight. On one side were voyageurs from La Compagnie de La Vérendrye, muskets blasting as they hid behind trees and snow-dusted knolls. At least two voyageurs lay wounded or dead on the ground. Through the trees, we could see their enemies — the forces of Lord Selkirk. As the crack of the muskets echoed, they too sacrificed lives for this frozen patch of earth. After several more volleys, the voyageurs put the run to their English opponents.

THOMAS TRICKE

For a few moments, all was silent. Then, as if on cue, the "slain" men from both factions got up, dusted snow off their period costumes, and gave each other a friendly nod. The crowd cheered. A little later, the re-enactors gathered in a nearby bunkhouse to share a toast. Coming on the eve of Louis Riel Day, it seemed a poignant and fitting way to celebrate Manitoba's rich history.

As we headed back inside the fort, my seven-year-old son brimmed with questions. He knew a little about the background of the Red River Colony — that's what passes for bedtime stories when your dad runs a history magazine.

But this was *different*. This was history come to life.

Colin Mackie, Fort Gibraltar's heritage program manager, isn't surprised. He says historical re-enactments of battles and of scenes from everyday life capture our imaginations in a way the written word cannot.

"It personalizes history," he says. "You come to our site, head to the blacksmith shop and see the sparks flying as he hits the metal. Your ears ring. Here, you smell the stew cooking over a fire."

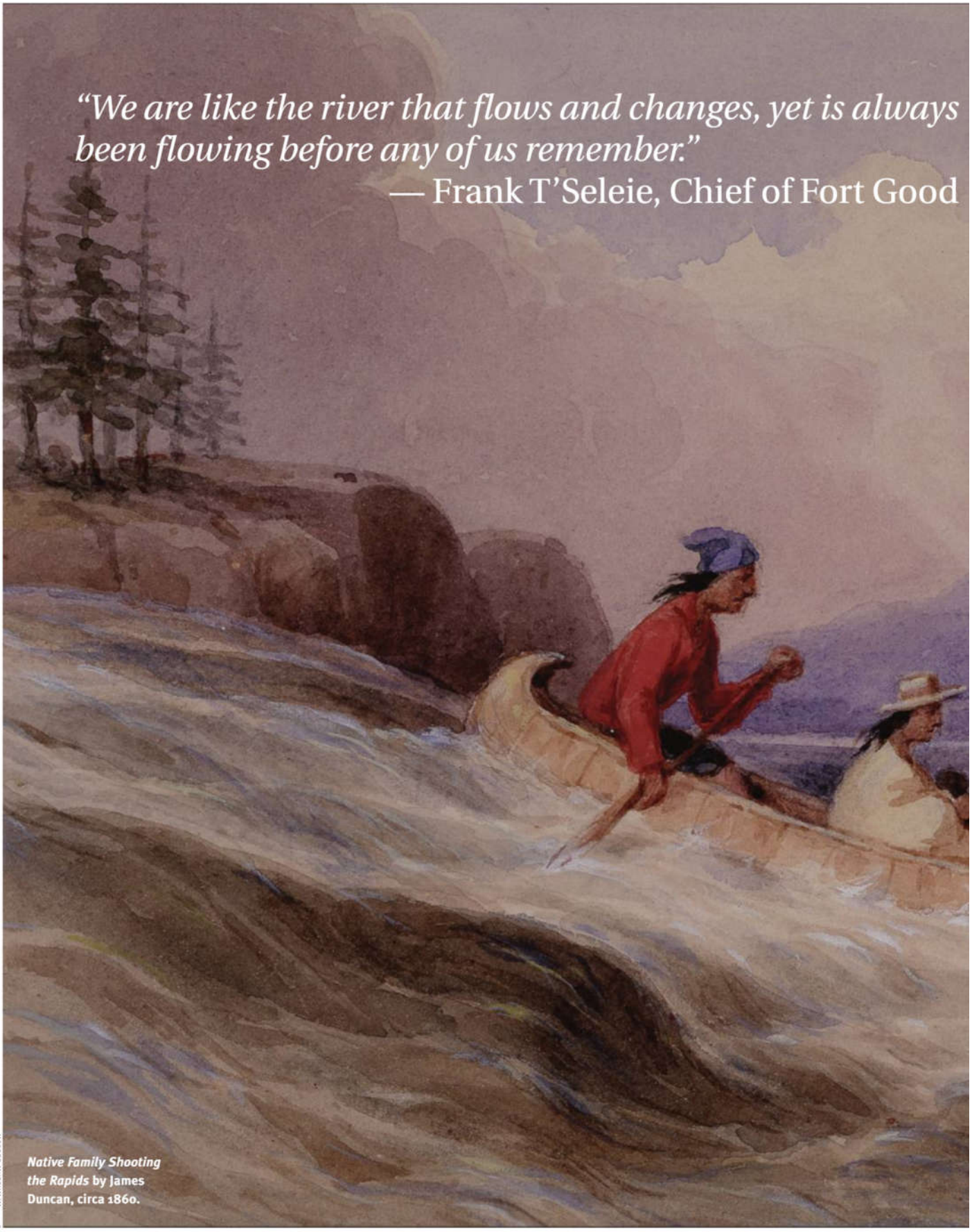
As I write this, federal officials have just cancelled a planned, and politically charged, re-enactment of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham meant to mark the 250th anniversary of the event in September 2009. Meanwhile, the more than 2,000 re-enactors who had planned to attend the event were looking for a new venue outside Quebec. Should the re-enactment have gone ahead at the actual battle site? It's a difficult question — one that provokes intense emotions on both sides.

All I know is this: In Winnipeg, on a crisp winter day, a seven-year-old boy saw dry, dusty history come alive before his eyes. Later that evening, as the boy sat with a crayon, trying his best to recreate "the battle of Fort Gibraltar," a certain history magazine editor understood that there is an intrinsic value to remembering — and re-enacting — our shared past that transcends politics or personal agendas.

Mark Reid

Mark Reid, Editor
editors@historysociety.ca

COVER: STEVE WADDEN


"We are like the river that flows and changes, yet is always been flowing before any of us remember."
— Frank T'Seleie, Chief of Fort Good

Native Family Shooting the Rapids **by James Duncan, circa 1860.**

MCCORD MUSEUM/M2938

the same ... it has

Hope band, 1975.

The Beaver

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People loved their beer. Yet when zealous prohibitionists launched a holy crusade against the brewers, the brewers lost.

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Today, they call her Canada's Rosa Parks. But back in 1946, Viola Desmond's destiny as a civil rights icon seemed unlikely.

Making Noise BY SUSAN GOLDENBERG **30**

Many of Hollywood's most distinctive, Oscar-winning sound effects were the work of a little-known Canadian.

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The people of Lower Canada recoiled in horror as British authorities set out to make a gruesome example of an American agitator.

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Letters

·SPECIAL AVIATION ISSUE·
The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAG
100
YEARS OF FLIGHT
The highs and lows of Canada's aviation history.
Flight
Bell was already yesterday's man. But he saw his
the unlikeliest of places. by Charlotte Gray

Aviation collectible

I know that I speak for many readers when I state that the special aviation issue [February/March 2009] is one of the very best, all-time, of *Beaver* publications. This issue will become a collector's item — certainly among the aviation fraternity.

The story "First Flight" by Charlotte Gray completes this portion of the records with fine original photos of our aviation pioneers, from Douglas McCurdy to Marc Garneau. We then learn about the Avro Arrow thanks to the story "Shooting Arrows." Its beautifully illustrated pages bring us to Black Friday — certainly the most amazing and retrograde incident that has ever been recorded in aviation history.

These pages have received a treatment that could only have come from someone who was familiar with the details of modern aircraft construction. As well, the folded, bilingual illustration of the *Silver Dart* is beautifully and accurately done. It looks equally handsome in French or English!

And as a final word: Bev Tallon's neat and interesting stories are always much enjoyed.

Rex Terpening
Vancouver, British Columia

The great debate

As a child, I watched with a thudding heart as the Avro Arrow flew over my house in Belleville, Ontario, escorted by what I believe were F-100s. The planes were low, the noise was terrific, and I think I can remember black smoke trailing behind.

I have heard rumours that the reason the Arrow was cancelled was that American agents were picking up details of the Arrow project in Russia.

A suspicion grew that Soviet spies were operating quite freely at the Avro plant. The American administration was concerned that engineering details of such an advanced aircraft were reaching their Cold War enemy. Prime Minister John Deifenbaker, very sensitive to charges of being gullible to espionage, suddenly cancelled the entire project.

As your article "Shooting Arrows" points out, nothing was left: photos, blueprints, pieces of the aircraft, and other records were either destroyed or shipped south to American plants.

As in many other espionage situations, there was no simple way to identify the spies. It was possible to fire them all, and then move selected engineers to American projects, where security was habitually much higher. To me, this is by far the most plausible account of the situation.

Jim Ross
London, Ontario

Nothing to yolk about

I just received the February/March issue of my gift subscription to *The Beaver*. As always, I found it to be excellent and enjoyable, well written, with high-quality content and production.

So I was surprised that your writers and proofreaders need to understand the difference between "yolk" and "yoke." See the fourth paragraph in the top-right of page 22, and in the middle of the nice "100 Years of Flight" poster. ("The pilot controlled ... .") I'm sure you'll do better next time.

Hank Bird
Via email

[*Editor's note: We have egg on our faces over this one. It certainly should have read "yoke."*]

Other aviation greats

I love *The Beaver* and read every word in it. I think you missed a couple of great Canadian planes in your aviation history issue [February/March 2009] — the CF-100 and the Twin Otter.

The CF-100 was the only Canadian-designed-and-built all-weather jet fighter. Six hundred and ninety-two were built and served between 1952 and 1981. It was particularly important in the 1960s to 1970s Cold War period, when Canada had a serious air force and was the first line of defence against the Soviet "Bear."

The Twin Otter ranks pretty close to the Beaver airplane as a larger carrier for STOL [short takeoff and landing] situations.

Charles Conn
Via email

No more Governors General?

Christopher Moore ["That King-Byng thing," December 2008/January 2009] gently suggests that Canadians elect a president, like Ireland (or, for that matter, Germany or Israel), who would have little executive power except to stifle the risk of a prime minister's reach exceeding his constitutional grasp.

He claims that we need a "Canadian head of state." The stand-in for this is a Canadian governor general, of which Michaëlle Jean is the latest in a procession of journalists and political placemen.

Our forefathers had a different opinion. The British Lord Byng was a successful governor general because, a few years earlier, he had commanded Canadian troops so well at Vimy Ridge and elsewhere that they referred to themselves as "Byng's Boys."

I also suspect that the office of the GG has outlived its usefulness, but for different reasons. The Queen no longer needs a representative in her distant Dominion. With telephone, fax, and email, she can communicate with her Canadian prime minister directly.

Indeed, a few years ago, British Prime Minister Tony Blair passed "e-government" legislation that the Queen signed with an electronic signature.

Canada should adopt similar legislation, eliminating the need even to send bills over the Atlantic for her signature. She would only need to fly to Canada once every year or so to receive the letters of credence of new ambassadors.

JOHN R. GRAHAM
SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA

Anna of Montreal

I was so pleased to see in your December 2008/January 2009 issue the lovely picture of Anna Leonowens ["Anna, the King, and I"]. I, like your author, knew Anna from the film *The King and I* and from her connection with the art school in Halifax, where I lived for a spell.

However it was as background to a trip to Thailand that I read *Anna and the King of Siam* by Margaret Landon, a wonderful biography of an extraordinary life.

Of great interest and surprise to me as a Montrealer was the fact that Anna is buried in the city's Mount Royal Protestant Cemetery. After her years in Halifax, she moved with her daughter's family to Montreal — her daughter's husband was with a bank — and so she lived her last years there.

AUDREY REEKIE
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Great Winkworth calendar

We have really enjoyed looking through the 2009 calendar that came with the [December 2008/January 2009] *Beaver* magazine. What a great way to bring people's attention to the wonderful artworks that show how things were in earlier centuries in Canada.

It's good to see that the calendar is neither oversized and can't be mailed in standard brown envelopes, nor printed on a flashy, glossy, high-end magazine paper.

In my opinion, the dull finish on the paper enhances the appearance of the pictures.

In particular, the drawing of Musquodoboit is exquisite. Thank you.

PATRICIA WEBB
VIA EMAIL

Horse race

I very much enjoyed Ishbel Moore's article ["The Fire Horses" December 2008/January 2009.]

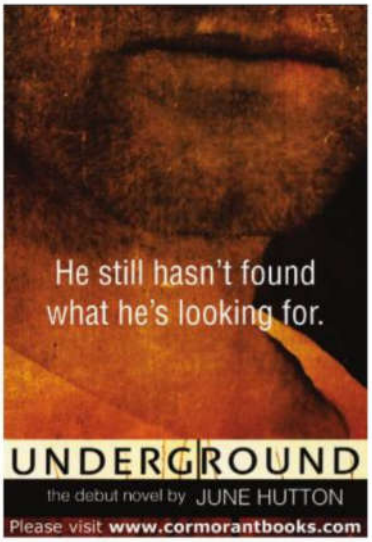
It brought back memories of the vivid recollections of Ray Lewis, a Hamilton Olympian and the first Canadian-born black man to win an Olympic medal, recounted in a book I wrote entitled *Rapid Ray: The Story of Ray Lewis.*

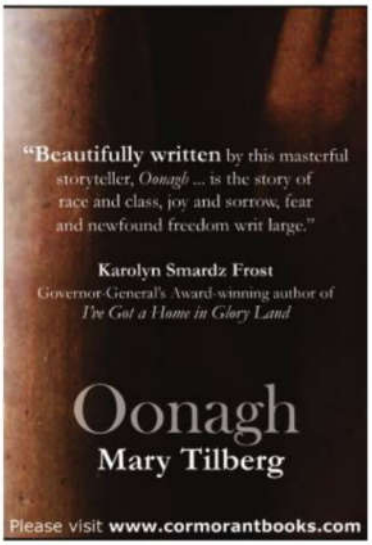
Born in 1910, Ray recalled his days as a youngster running alongside the fire horses as they rushed out of the firehouse: "We could run as fast as the hook-and-ladder wagon for about fifty or sixty metres, even pulling off ahead of them for a while. I would listen to the sound of horses' hooves pounding on the street, before they would pick up their pace and canter off ahead of us up the street, leaving us to catch our breath in the dust they had stirred up."

JOHN COOPER
WHITBY, ONTARIO

[Editor's note: We regret that Charlotte Gray's biography was inadvertantly left out after the "First Flight" article, February/March 2009: Charlotte Gray is the author of the 2006 bestseller Reluctant Genius: The Passionate Life and Inventive Mind of Alexander Graham Bell, *which won the Ottawa Book Award and the Donald Creighton Award for Ontario History. Gray has written seven books on Canadian history and is one of Canada's best-known writers.]*

***The Beaver* welcomes readers' comments.** E-mail us at editors@historysociety.ca or write to *The Beaver*, PO Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0G9 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

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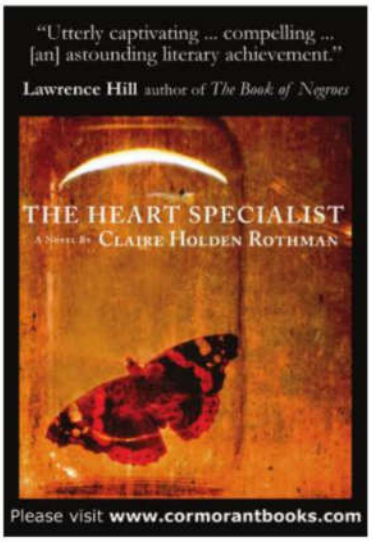
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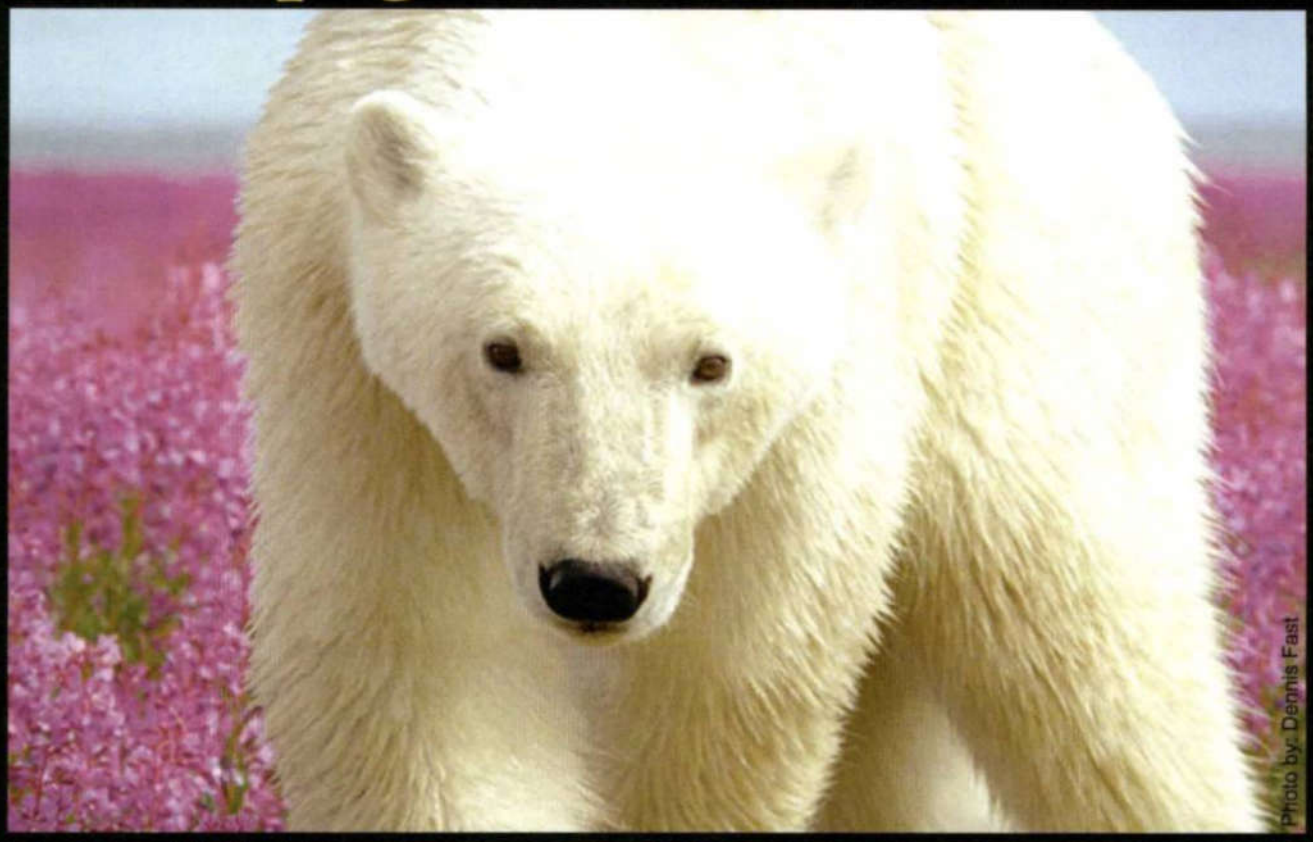

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NORTHERN life

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CA

Calm Air

Extinction Cave

Unique hole in ground may yield bones of ice age creatures.

A cave in southern Manitoba's Interlake region is generating some excitement due to speculation that it may contain the bones of extinct mammals such as sabre-toothed tigers and mammoths.

Aptly named Extinction Cave, the cavern was first explored in 2005 by Willard Anderson, a caving expert and former chief naturalist for Manitoba. Anderson, now retired, says the floor of the cave is littered with bones, some with cut marks suggesting humans had butchered the animals with primitive tools.

COURTESY WILLARD ANDERSON

Willard Anderson

"They are random and spread all over in a six-by-eight-foot area," says Anderson. "We found everything from ribs, to leg bones, to teeth. So it was evident to me it had been a natural animal trap, but it also could have been used by humans [tossing their kitchen trash into the cave]."

Archaeologists Virginia Petch and Ed Fread of Northern Lights Heritage Services Inc. in Winnipeg identified the bones of bison, elk, deer, birds, and small mammals. Remarkably, one bison leg bone had a stone imbedded in it.

"The stone is something that we are grappling with right now," says Petch, noting that in early guns, stones were sometimes used instead of musket balls. The researchers, who plan to publish their findings in a scientific journal, have yet to carbon-date the material.

Anderson, who is the president of the Manitoba Speleological Society, believes Manitoba's Extinction Cave may be unique in Canada.

"I haven't found another cave with clear evidence of ancient human activity," he said.

Anderson also says the cave, located south of a large moraine, does not appear to have been disturbed by the last glacial advance. Thus, animals could potentially have been accidentally falling into its opening for thousands of years.

"There could be mastodons, cave bears, sabre-toothed tigers, mammoths, those kinds of animals," he said.

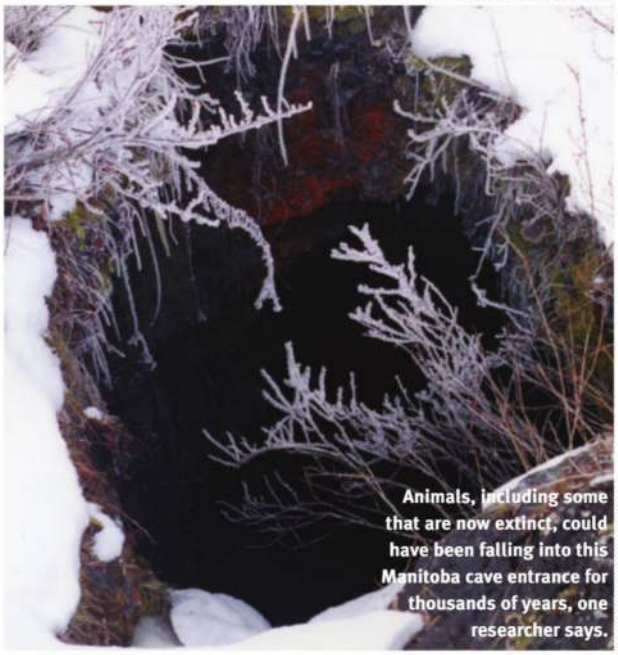
Finding evidence of ancient species in Canadian caves is not common. Exceptions include Vancouver Island, where caves have yielded the 12,000-year-old bones of mountain goats and the 2,500-year-old skeletons of marmots.

It will take further excavation of Manitoba's Extinction Cave to determine if it in fact lives up to its name. This requires funding, which is being sought from Manitoba's Historic Resources Branch. Anderson sees potential in eventually turning the site, located just north of Teulon, a town about a thirty-minute drive north of Winnipeg, into a heritage park.

"Then, if a full archaeological dig went on for some years, I would like to see an interpretive centre attached to it. Because who knows what kind of extinct species could be at the bottom of the cave," Anderson said.

"Even if you had just one animal fall in every ten years, that would be a phenomenal number of animals."

— Nelle Oosterom



COURTESY WILLIARD ANDERSON

Animals, including some that are now extinct, could have been falling into this Manitoba cave entrance for thousands of years, one researcher says.

April 8

To note the day in 1609 when the eight men who survived the Quebec winter with Champlain observed the spring thaw and were first visited by Huron. Brush the snow off your welcome mat.

Currents

Our home & native ...

Music Synthesizer

Where would the music of the 1980s be without Hugh Le Caine? A physicist and musician born in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Le Caine created the precursor to the modern music synthesizer.

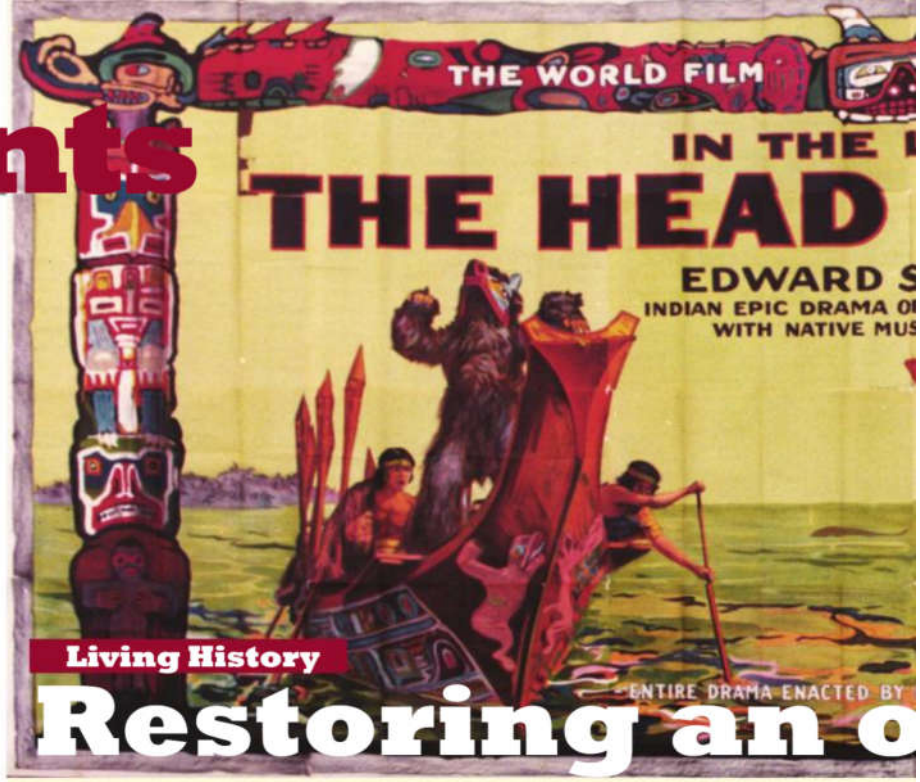
Working in his home lab from 1945 to 1948, he developed the Sackbut, an electronic keyboard he named after a Renaissance-period trombone. The timbre, pitch, and volume of the instrument's sound were controlled by voltage and could be altered by knobs or by the pressure exerted on the keys. Operation by voltage control was a first for an electronic instrument, and it remains the way synthesizers are played today.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/MUSIC DIVISION (MUS 107)

In 1954, the National Research Council in Ottawa put Le Caine in charge of a new project to develop electronic instruments. His playful 1955 composition *Dripsody*, which manipulates the sound of a single drop of water falling into a bucket, was one of many he created to demonstrate the possibilities of his new inventions.

From 1969 to 1973, the NRC produced two newer models of the Sackbut with the hope of putting the synthesizers on the market. Le Caine retired in 1974 after manufacturing failed to get off the ground, but that didn't stop others from producing and selling synthesizers.

— **Jen Clark**



Living History

Restoring an o

A chance 2003 encounter between an anthropologist and an expert in early twentieth century art and ethnography has resulted in the restoration of what some have called the most ethnographically significant silent film ever made.

In 1914, U.S. photographer Edward Curtis — renowned for his stunning portraits of what he considered the vanishing North American indigenous peoples — produced the first feature-length film to star only native North Americans. Curtis's saga of love and war, entitled *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, allowed a never-before-seen glimpse into the culture and life of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nation of Queen Charlotte Strait on the Northwest coast of British Columbia, including ceremonies and dances deemed illegal during the potlatch prohibition from 1884 to 1951.

Unfortunately, after a successful gala opening at the Moore Theatre in Seattle, subsequent financial returns were paltry. Curtis sold his sole remaining negative copy and relinquished his copyright for $1,000 in 1924.

The film resurfaced in 1973 as a modified documentary renamed *In the Land of the War Canoes*. But when art and ethnography expert Dr. Brad Evans first viewed that version in 1997, he was disappointed. "Much of the ethnographic and early cinematographic value of Curtis's original film had been lost in the remodelling," says Evans, of Rutgers University in New Jersey.

In 2003, Evans met Kwakwaka'wakw researcher and anthropologist Dr. Aaron Glass, then with the University of British Columbia. Together with the Kwakwaka'wakw and Andrea Sanborn, executive director of the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, B.C., they decided to resurrect Curtis's original version.

May 19

To note the day in 1790 when four First Nations ceded land between Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie to Britain for 1,200 pounds and the right to hunt. Take out a second mortgage.

May 22

To mark the day in 1775 that Quebec Bishop Jean-Olivier Briand forbade women from marrying American soldiers and ordered loyalty to Britain. Elope.

This 1914 billboard advertised the original version of the Edward Curtis film.

COURTESY BILL UTLEY

With the expertise of Jere Guldin, a film restoration specialist at the University of California Los Angeles Film and Television Archive, the team embarked on a project to restore the film, complete with original colour tinting and music.

"We wanted to reveal both Curtis's artistic intentions and the social history of the Kwakwaka'wakw participation in the making of the film," says Glass, currently with the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Their seemingly impossible task was aided by the fortuitous discovery of lost film fragments, the original musical score, and original promotional posters.

Accompanied by a performance of the original live orchestral score — heard for the first time since 1914 — and a performance by contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw dancers, some of whom are descendants of the original actors, the film contains a treasure trove of anthropological details on the history of the Kwakwaka'wakw people. Despite last-minute logistical nightmares — the final copy of the film was delivered only minutes before its premiere, and dance regalia were detained at U.S. Customs — the film has already thrilled audiences in Vancouver and six major U.S. cities.

"Connecting the restored film version to a contemporary First Nations dance presentation shows the connection to our ancestors and much of what we still do today in cultural ceremony," Sanborn says. "Audience reaction to our presentation was the most gratifying aspect."

Watch for upcoming screenings in Toronto and Ottawa, plus a possible DVD release, and visit TheBeaver.ca for links to more about the film. **— Ann Chandler**

Stamp if you like horses

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The Canadian Horse and Newfoundland Pony are galloping onto two new stamps issued by Canada Post. Available May 16, these philatelic beauties commemorate the parts the two breeds played in the settlement of Canada.

The Canadian Horse, descended from French King Louis XIV's stock, was brought to Canada in the late seventeenth century. The breed was capable of enduring the harsh climate of New France and was nicknamed "the horse of steel" or "little iron horse."

By 1763, there were around 13,000 horses in the colony. The Canadian Horse almost became extinct several times.

Fortunately, it has survived and was made an official symbol of our country on April 30, 2002.

The small Newfoundland Pony is believed to be from English or European stock. Brought to the island around 1600, it adapted well and is possibly the oldest breed in North America. The sure-footed little pony weighs between five hundred and one thousand pounds.

The Newfoundland government declared the pony the province's first heritage animal on September 5, 1997, but today it too is facing extinction.

Canada Post spokesperson Nicole Lemire says four million stamps will be printed and sold in booklets of ten. **–Beverley Tallon**

May 24

To celebrate the day in 1876 that saw the opening of Mount Royal Park in Montreal. Have a picnic.

May 30

To remember that on this day in 1930 the Fair Wages and Eight-Hour Day Act was enacted for all federal government employees. Sleep in until dawn.

Currents

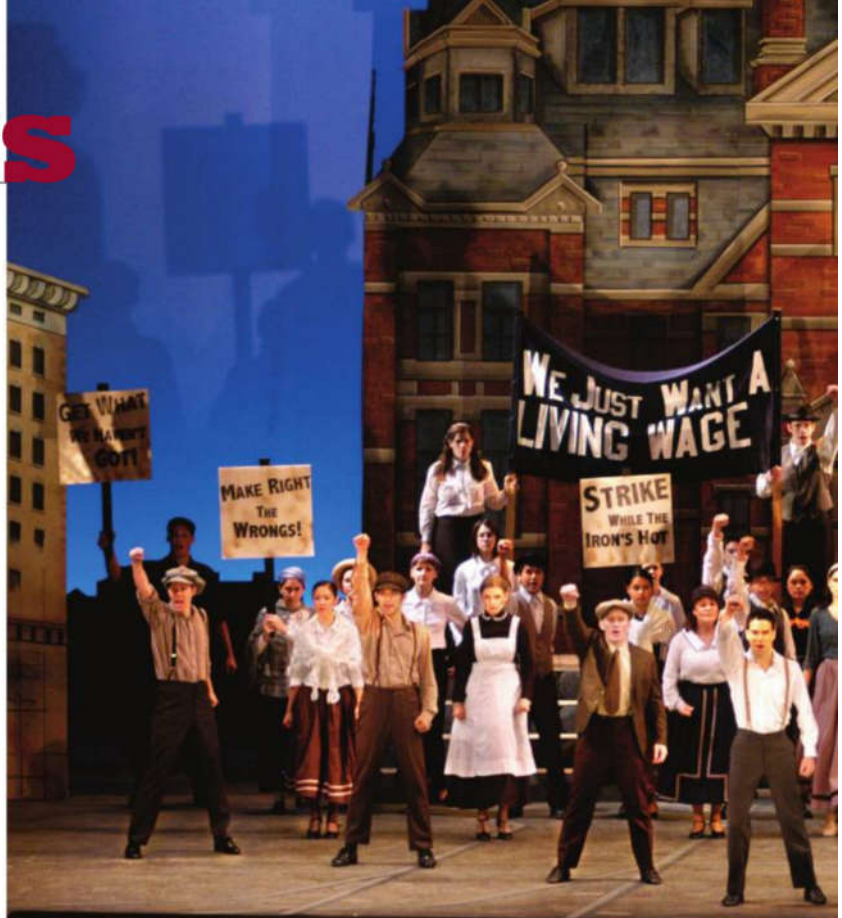
Electric anniversary

IEEE, the worldwide association for scientists dedicated to technological improvement, celebrates its 125th anniversary May 13.

Originally founded in 1884 as the American Association of Electrical Engineers, the group joined the Institute of Radio Engineers in 1963 and renamed itself the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. Now known as IEEE ("eye-triple-e"), the organization represents a diverse collection of more than 375,000 science and technology professionals in 160 countries.

COURTESY IEEE CANADA

The Canadian arm of IEEE brings together several engineering organizations with roots dating as far back as the 1880s. Anniversary events include the presentation of a plaque honouring the inventor of the pacemaker, Winnipeg-born John Hopps, on September 29 in Toronto. — **Jen Clark**



RETAKING T

On June 21, 1919, tensions were high in the booming city of Winnipeg. Paralyzed by a lengthy general strike, the city was brimming with ethnic frictions and political fears. Its downtown streets were filled with thousands of strikers — many of them Ukrainian and Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe — and onlookers of all sorts.

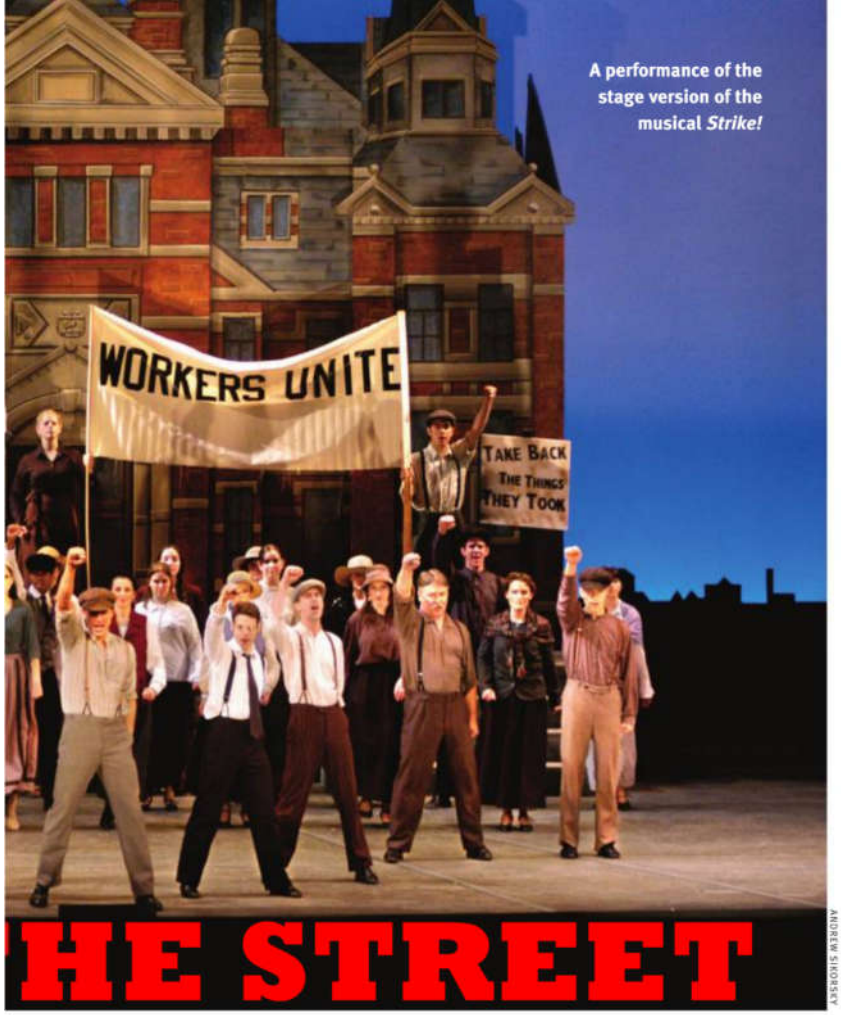
Chaos erupted after North West Mounted Police cavalry, including some Great War veterans fresh from fighting "Reds" in Russia, charged onto Main Street. Before long, shots rang out and one man — a Ukrainian immigrant named Mike Sokolowski — lay dead near city hall, a bullet through the heart.

This May, ninety years after Sokolowski's death, thousands of Winnipeggers are expected to return to Winnipeg's Main Street — but not in protest. Instead, they'll have the opportunity to enjoy the latest version of the celebrated musical *Strike!*, which draws upon the events of that day.

Danny Schur, the musical's co-writer and producer, said he knew early on that Sokolowski — one of only two fatalities in six weeks of unrest — would be the central character of his dramatic production.

Himself a Ukrainian-Canadian, Schur is a veritable one-man Winnipeg General Strike agitator. Besides producing two versions of the musical, a book, and walking tours, he is now at work on a movie deal.

Strike! was first performed outdoors near Winnipeg's city hall in 2004, and since then in an expanded version on stages in Winnipeg and



A performance of the stage version of the musical *Strike!*

ANDREW SIKORSKY

HE STREET

beyond. Schur is very excited about the upcoming May 23 performance, when the musical will be performed right in front of city hall.

He says the audience will be treated to a true spectacle, including a recreation of the infamous cavalry change — albeit with six riders instead of the fifty-four who rode in 1919 — as well as the debut of a full-scale replica streetcar like the one rioters overturned in front of the old city hall ninety years ago.

"It will be about as close as you can come to being in the place and feeling what happened in 1919," he said.

Schur is quick to note that producing a musical involves numerous collaborators. His include playwright Rick Chafe, who co-wrote the award-winning script, and David Hewlett of the University of Winnipeg's theatre department, who designed the replica streetcar.

The one-hour outdoor performance focuses on the political events surrounding the protests, cavalry charge, and Sokolowski's death. Meanwhile, the full stage version of *Strike!*, involving a love story between Sokolowski's godson and a Jewish suffragette, will be performed later this summer at the Canwest Performing Arts Centre at The Forks National Historic Site in Winnipeg.

Schur says it's the beginning of an annual summer run he hopes will turn into a permanent fixture at the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights once that institution opens in 2012. "I think *Strike!* explains Winnipeg to Winnipeggers and visitors better than any dry piece of literature could, plus it puts a human face on the era better than any history books could," Schur says.

— **Phil Koch**

By the numbers

NFB vault

The National Film Board of Canada celebrates its seventieth anniversary on May 9. Since its beginnings in 1939, Canada's public film producer and distributor has created over 13,000 productions and received more than 5,000 awards. Its honours include twelve Academy Awards, seventy Oscar nominations, and more than ninety Genies. New this year is a free online screening room at NFB.ca. Here, however, we go inside the NFB's Montreal vault, where its collections are stored for safekeeping.

2 The temperature of the vault in degrees Celsius. The relative humidity is maintained at twenty-five percent.

1,000 The number of years films can be preserved without damage. Viewing is possible, with some decay, for up to 3,000 years.

65 The number of different languages in the collection, ranging from French and English to Inuktitut and Serbo-Croat.

130,000 The number of film cans in the vault.

80 The number of different formats of materials stored in the vault. Films in the NFB collection range from 8-mm to 70-mm, and cassettes from VHS to HD Cam SR.

4,268 The number of titles from the collection that have been digitized.

700 Films currently available for streaming at the NFB's online screening room.

For Canadian history news updated weekly, read the News Splash! at TheBeaver.ca .

Your Story

Finding Uncle Danny

Left, Virginia Foley signs a registry at Nine Elms Cemetery near Vimy Ridge, the final resting place of her great-uncle, Daniel Foley.

Below, an image of Danny Foley as a young man.

VIRGINIA FOLEY

The young soldier fell at Vimy Ridge and was soon forgotten. Nine decades later, his descendant, Virginia Foley, would find him and leave him a piece of her heart.

"Oh, Danny boy…" The old song sticks in my mind as I stand beside the towering statue of a cloaked and hooded woman, her eyes downcast. I feel small, very small. Together we overlook Vimy Ridge, she depicting Canada mourning her lost sons and I to pay homage to my great-uncle, who lost his young life on this lonely field in France ninety years ago.

Through a grey sky, thick with heavy rain clouds, I swear I can see the shadows of soldiers climbing up the ridge, clammy hands clenched tightly around their rifles. As thunder rolls in the distance, I imagine the deafening roar of machine guns, mortars, and cannons. I try to imagine dampness mingling with the smell of cordite, choking the air. But gazing hard across this pockmarked hill, I realize I cannot possibly bring to mind the smells, the sounds, and the agonizing fear that gripped every young man who began his ascent on April 9, 1917.

Vimy Ridge had been under German control since 1914. With its unobstructed view for tens of kilometres, it had enormous strategic importance and thus had to be taken. The Canadian Corps was about to try.

Made up of volunteers, two-thirds of the corps was British-born. One of the soldiers was my great-uncle who had left his home in Scotland to travel to Canada and signed up with the Alberta Infantry Regiment. Family lore suggests that his mother disapproved of him joining the British army — his brother Thomas had enlisted a year earlier — so he ran away to Canada and signed up under a false name, Daniel Fowler.

His real name was Daniel Foley. He

was one of six children from a family of poor means, an average bloke in the industrial city of Perth. He worked in the coal mines and, like many of his peers, perhaps looked to the war with a sense of adventure, a way out of his bleak destiny in the mines.

On Easter Monday morning, April 9, 1917, almost two years to the day after he'd enlisted, the battle for Vimy Ridge was set to begin. Danny had already been fighting in France for six months but this battle was different. It was the first time that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps were to attack simultaneously.

At 5:30 a.m., it all began. Mines exploded in no man's land, creating craters to shelter advancing troops from machine-gun fire. Allied artillery barrages whistled overhead. Together with his comrades from the 10th Battalion, Private Daniel Foley advanced. Only days earlier, perhaps realizing the difficulties that would be created if he died under a false name, he had confessed to his superiors and his records were changed to reflect his real identity.

The first advance reached its initial objective in less than an hour. There was a brief rest for the men on the ground, then another advance, and another. After three days of steady fighting and hard-won victories, the ridge finally fell into the hands of the allies on April 12. But Danny wasn't there to celebrate the victory. He was killed in the first offensive. He was twenty-six years old.

In total, 3,598 Canadians lost their lives in the three days of the battle and 10,602 were wounded. In 1922, France donated two hundred and fifty acres in perpetuity to the people of Canada, where now resides the largest of Canada's war monuments.

As I stand beside the great and sorrowful stone lady, I mourn those whose lives were lost.

Six and a half kilometres away, past a field where rows of corn sway quietly in the wind, I find my great uncle's grave at Nine Elms Cemetery and crouch down to trace his name in the stone. I reflect on the path that had taken me here, to the gravesite of a man of whom I had heard very little about as I was growing up. While both of my grandfathers saw active service during the Great War, they were among the fortunate ones to return home. Danny seemed a forgotten soul.

VIRGINIA FOLEY

The gravestone of Danny Foley, killed in action during the battle of Vimy Ridge.

My journey to honour his memory started in 2007, when my husband and I temporarily took up residence in Scotland. There was much I didn't know about my father's clan, so I visited Perth several times seeking connection to my roots.

My quest led me to a cousin, who had researched the family tree and posted it online. I hadn't realized until I perused the site that my great-uncle had died at Vimy Ridge.

As I learned more about this battle, Canadian pride welled up inside of me. I knew I had to go to Vimy, to see where my great-uncle and so many others had lost their lives. I needed to somehow let him know that his memory would live on.

My great-uncle is a long way from his homeland of Scotland and even farther from Canada, a country he travelled to as the war broke out only long enough to sign his life away. Danny might have made Canada his home, had he lived.

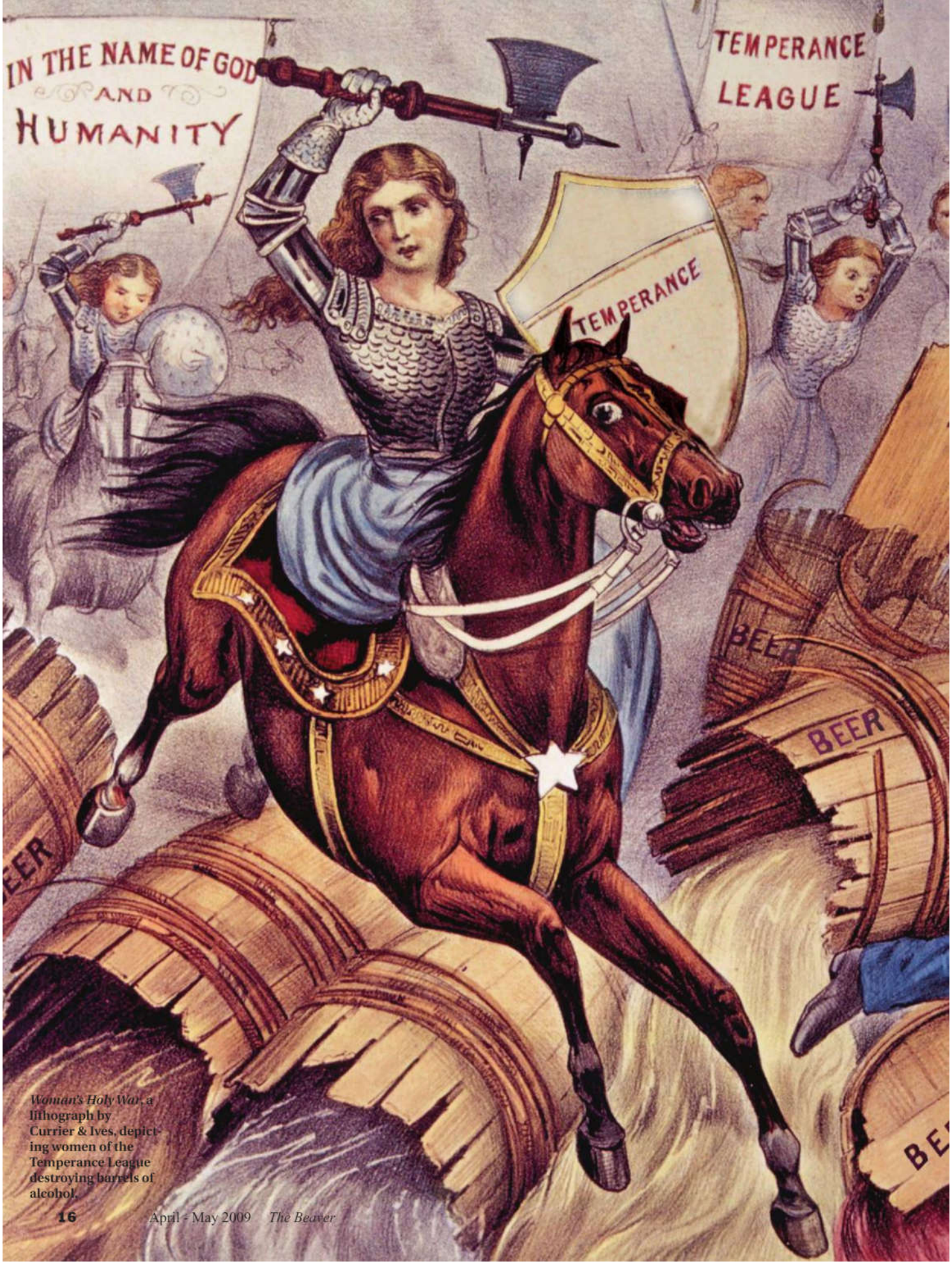
In the stone wall surrounding the cemetery, there is a book in which I write:

"To my Great-Uncle Danny: I never knew you but I'm leaving a piece of my heart with you today."

As I close the gate of Nine Elms, a gentle rain begins to fall and the words of the famous song, "Danny Boy," wash over me:

"And if you come, when all the flowers are dying / And I am dead, as dead I well may be / You'll come and find the place where I am lying / And kneel and say an 'Ave' there for me."

Virginia Foley is a Canadian writer of Scottish and Irish descent, currently living in Wisconsin with her British husband. She writes on many subjects and has just completed her first historical novel.



Woman's Holy War, a lithograph by Currier & Ives, depicting women of the Temperance League destroying barrels of alcohol.

BEER WARS

People loved their beer. Yet when zealous prohibitionists launched a holy crusade against the brewers, the brewers lost.

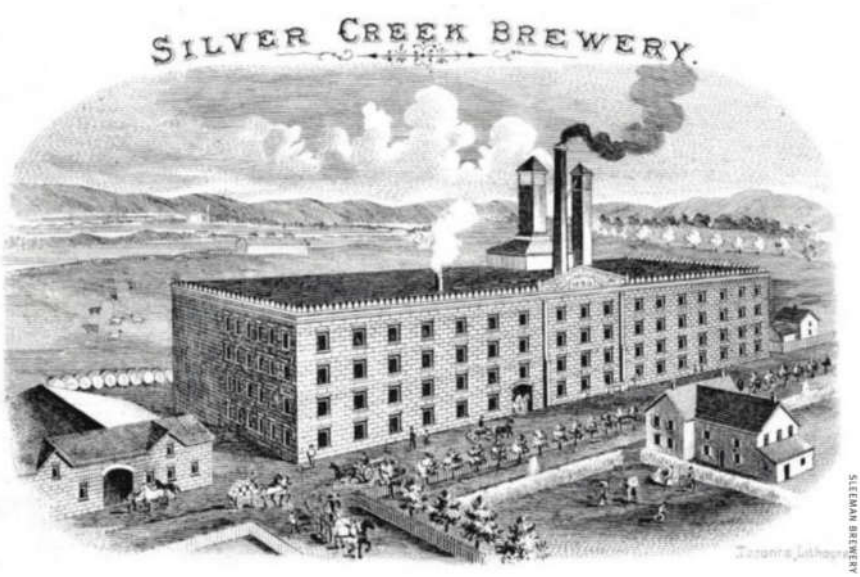
by Matthew Bellamy

On June 17, 1918, Konrad Knapp sat down at his makeshift desk in a half-lit corner of his brewery. From the desk's only drawer he pulled a piece of paper and began to write to his sister. He had often done this over the years, informing her of family matters and the state of his business. The Calgary-based Mountain Springs Brewery had been a growing concern in the West since the 1890s. But the tone of this letter was more solemn than those he had written in the past. "I am no longer able to continue," Knapp wrote. "The prohibitionists are causing me to lose my business."

During the first decades of the twentieth century, one province after another went "dry." In March 1918 the federal government added to the brewers' plight by making it illegal to manufacture "intoxicating" drinks. Four months later, Knapp put all the assets of his brewery up for sale and got out of brewing for good.

Knapp was not the only brewer to be affected by the apostles of teetotalism and their war on beer. Between 1878 and 1928 the number of breweries was cut by almost three quarters. Some of Canada's most venerable brewers were driven out of business as a consequence of numerous attempts by government to stop the selling, and ultimately, drinking, of alcohol. Sleeman Brewing and Malting Company, for example, was forced to turn off its taps in 1933 after eighty-six years in the brewing business. It wasn't until 1988 that John Sleeman, who was named after his great-great-grandfather and founder, revived the family business. Likewise, Carling Brewery was unable to operate under the constraints of Prohibition and was sold to the rum-running syndicate of Windsor, Ontario-based Low, Leon and Burns. The Carling brand went through several more ownership

ILLUSTRATION DIGITALLY ALTERED BY MICHEL GROLEAU WITH THE PERMISSION OF CORBIS



SLEEMAN BREWERY

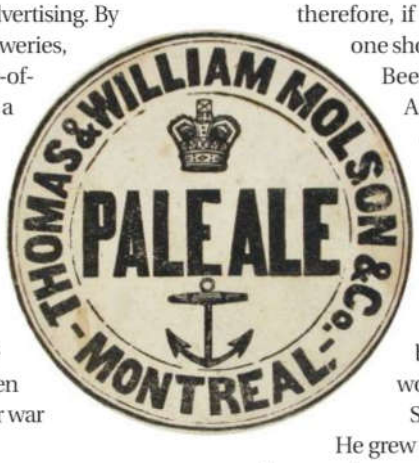
Above: The Sleeman family's Silver Creek Brewery in Guelph, Ontario.

Below: Brewer John Carling.

changes and is currently owned by Molson Coors Brewing Company.

Bottom feeders like Edward Plunkett Taylor — later dubbed Excess Profits Taylor by his critics — used the opportunity of Prohibition to capture assets at rock-bottom prices and to construct large breweries that could capitalize on modern production techniques and advertising. By 1935, Taylor's company, Canadian Breweries, was twenty times the size of most turn-of-the-century breweries and represented a new post-Prohibition reality.

Gone were the days of small breweries producing distinctive beers for a local market. Gone also were the fortunes of many Canadian brewers. Legacies were lost; thousands of well-paying jobs disappeared; and the civil liberties of thirsty Canadians were restricted. Yet all this might all have been avoided had the brewers waged a better war against the prohibitionists.



In the early nineteenth century a religious awakening swept the land. Drunkenness was specifically singled out as a great sin. Canada at this time was awash in alcohol. When the English temperance advocate J.S. Buckingham visited in the 1840s, he was repulsed by the level of public intoxication. "From all the opportunities I had of judging," he scornfully wrote, "the people of Upper Canada are less temperate than the people of the United States. Absolute drunkenness abounds…."

If Buckingham had travelled to Kingston he might well have bumped into the future prime minister of Canada, John A. Macdonald, stumbling out of the local tavern, a stiff drink still in his hand, chanting his favourite ditty: "A drunk man is a terrible curse / But a drunken woman is twice as worse."

Only Macdonald's tall stature would have distinguished him. Most Canadians drank during the nineteenth century — men, women, and children. They drank at home, at work, at dances, at building bees, and during elections. They drank in taverns, hotels, marketplaces, factories, hospitals, and even churches. The Upper Canadian census of 1851 recorded 1,999 taverns, or one to every 478 people. Toronto had more taverns than streets. Troubles related to the high level of alcohol consumption combined with the religious awakening to give rise to the Canadian temperance movement. Early feminists were also strong supporters of Prohibition, since drinking fuelled domestic violence.

At first, the movement was not necessarily against beer. Indeed, due to its lower alcohol content, temperance advocates initially viewed beer as an ideal "temperance drink." But gradually, many in the movement embraced the more radical position of total abstinence or teetotalism. After all, teetotallers claimed, beer did not exist in Christ's time, and therefore, if one was to live in godly perfection, one should abstain. In fact, they were wrong. Beer goes back to pre-Christian times. And anti-prohibitionists could have countered that Christ turned water into wine. Nevertheless, Temperance leaders believed consumption of beer would inevitably lead to the use of harder alcohol. Moreover, as the prominent prohibitionist Francis Spence noted in 1875, too much beer, like too much wine or spirits, would result in drunkenness.

Spence was speaking from experience. He grew up in Toronto — with its more than a thousand grog shops in 1861 — and personally wit-

MCCORD MUSEUM

First Nations people probably saved Jacques Cartier and his men from dying from scurvy by showing them how to brew spruce beer.

A man is arrested in Toronto in September 1916 for violating prohibition.

RECORD BUSSEN

Above: *Waiting for the Signal*, a cartoon by John Wilson Bengough in 1886.

Prohibition primer

Sober second thought

Unlike the United States, which imposed a nationwide prohibition on alcohol from 1920 to 1933, Canada never had a country-wide ban. There was an attempt to impose Canada-wide prohibition when, in 1898, a small majority of Canadians voted in a plebiscite to ban alcohol. However, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier refused to impose such a law, saying a 51.3 percent majority was too small. Besides, Quebecers overwhelmingly opposed it.

Teetotalling by province

The decision was thus left to the provinces. Prince Edward Island was the first to get on the wagon; its prohibition period lasted the longest — from 1901 to 1948. Saskatchewan was next (1915 to 1925), then Ontario (1916 to 1927), Alberta (1916 to 1924), Manitoba (1916 to 1923), Nova Scotia (1916 to 1930), New Brunswick (1917 to 1927), and British Columbia (1917 to 1921). Newfoundland, which was not part of Canada at that time, imposed a prohibition law in 1917 and repealed it in 1924. Quebec's experiment with banning alcohol in 1918 lasted only a few weeks.

Law and loophole

The laws generally closed drinking establishments and forbade the sale of alcohol. Exceptions were made for its use in such things as medicine and industry. Interestingly, distillers and brewers could still make their product and sell it outside the jurisdictions they were located in. This created a loophole that was exploited by a handful of industrious brewers. In March of 1918 the newly elected Unionist federal government of Robert Borden closed the loophole.

The hangover

Total prohibition proved unenforceable. It led to organized crime in the form of rum-running and a proliferation of illegal drinking establishments. However, the influence of the temperance movement lives on today in provincial liquor control boards, restrictions on advertising, and strict rules governing places were alcohol is served.

During Prohibition, doctors suddenly started writing large numbers of prescriptions for alcohol for "medicinal purposes." Some veterinarians did the same for their "patients."

nessed the type of inebriation that caused Buckingham such concern. Thus Spence formed the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic.

At the alliance's inaugural convention in 1875, Spence laid out his strategy to put the "traffic" out of business. The Dominion Alliance would pressure the government to prohibit the production and consumption of booze, and simultaneously change the culture surrounding tippling. With this two-pronged approach spelled out, the alliance began lobbying Alexander Mackenzie's Liberal government for dry legislation. Unlike his predecessor, Prime Minister Mackenzie abhorred drink. Nevertheless, he felt that on this issue the people should decide. Consequently, in 1878, his government passed the Scott Act, giving local governments the right to prohibit, by popular vote, the retail sale of alcohol.

The passage of the act was the first federal legislative salvo launched in the battle over the bottle, and it came as a wake-up call for those engaged in brewing. Shortly thereafter, John Carling, the brewer-turned-Member of Parliament, wrote to a few of his brewing friends calling for collective reaction. It was a new approach for Carling. He was usually content to work alone, behind the scenes, promoting his interests and, incidentally, those of other London-Middlesex brewers.

Carling had begun brewing at the age of twenty-one when he and his brother, William, took over their father's brewery on the bank of the Thames River in London, Ontario. During the 1850s, the brothers Carling expanded their plant to take advantage of emerging technologies and markets. The brothers decided to protect this huge investment by having John Carling enter local politics. While William felt his brother's charisma was enough to endear him to voters, John left nothing to chance. On election day, he put the company's liquid assets to good use lubricating the electorate. The sop did not go unnoticed.

"In a room adjoining the polling station," wrote the editor of the *Canadian Free Press*, "was a barrel of beer for the refreshment of the thirsty, conspicuously branded with 'J. Carling,' but whether as brewer or donor, or what influence the beer may have exercised in securing the head of the poll, we do not pretend to say." Carling won the election of 1851 and never looked back. With the support of London's leading Conservatives, such as fellow brewer John Labatt, Carling moved smoothly from local to provincial and then federal politics.

As an MP, Carling represented London almost continuously between 1867 and 1895. The only time he was out of politics was during the Liberal years of 1874 to 1878. The latter period also saw the formation of the Dominion Alliance and the ratification of the Scott Act. Relegated to the political sidelines, Carling used the time to formulate a strategic response to the prohibitionists' attack on

COLLECTION OF NICOLAS BOURGEAULT

beer. What he envisioned was a brewers' equivalent to the Dominion Alliance, which would, in his words, "promote Canadian brewing and further the interests of brewers."

In 1879, the Canadian Brewers and Maltsters' Association (CBMA) was formed. At its first meeting, the CBMA decided to lobby for the Scott Act's repeal. The brewing lobby had reason to be optimistic about its chances. The too moralistic, too Ontario-centric, too ideological, and far too dry, Mackenzie was unable to defeat Macdonald's Conservatives at the polls. "The glass is half full," Carling cheerfully stated in 1879.

But on Parliament Hill there was no craving to revisit the liquor question. Even Macdonald — a man who enjoyed his drink almost as much as he did his political power — was unwilling to defend the liquor traffic. With his cabinet divided over the matter, "Old Tomorrow" recognized the advantages of inaction. Like such contemporary issues as abortion, marijuana use, and gay marriage, the prohibition of alcohol split nineteenth-century Canadians down the middle. In Quebec, support was negligible, whereas in the rural communities of English-speaking Canada support was relatively high. A man whose paramount concern was always unity, Macdonald was unwilling to take any action that might divide his party and the country.

The brewers were themselves divided. Most supported the CBMA's push to repeal the Scott Act, which allowed municipalities to prohibit the sale of alcohol. But there were some who lobbied the Senate for an exemption to the act that would allow for the sale of beer. Still others actually supported the law the way it was because it contained a loophole: nothing stopped brewers in dry municipalities from shipping their beer elsewhere.

Lacking a businesslike structure, the CBMA was unable to maintain the solidarity of brewers and rein in dissidents within the industry.

Canadians have enjoyed suds for centuries

Beer dates back as far as known civilization and has been a staple in cultures around the world. Made by combining water, a malted grain such as barley, a flavouring spice or herb such as hops, and yeast for fermentation, it was a relatively safe beverage in places where the water supply was unreliable. Beer also served as a nutritional component of diets, and has long played a role in religious and cultural events and ceremonies.

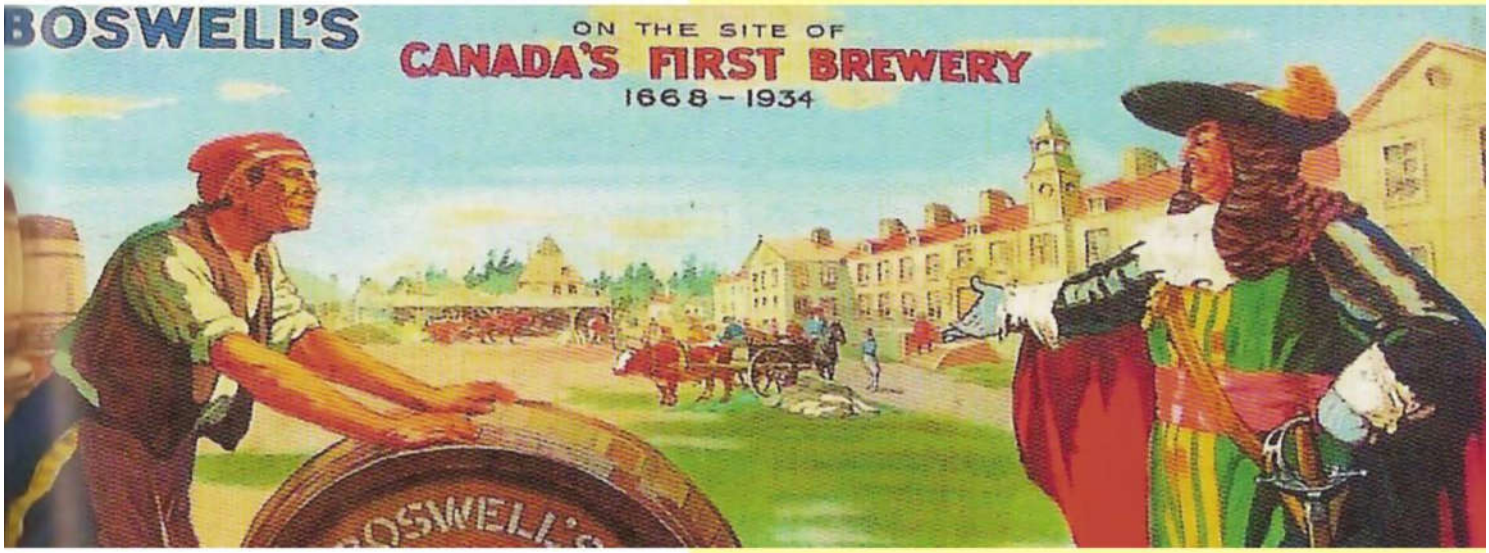
When Jacques Cartier arrived in North America, he and his crew were shown how to make the spruce beer Canada's First Nations were already brewing. Many early settlers brewed beer in their homes, including, reportedly, Canada's first farmer, Louis Hébert. Missionaries such as the Jesuits and Récollets set up breweries in New France early in the seventeenth century. But the foamy beverage was first produced on a large scale when Jean Talon, the colony's intendant, established La Brasserie du Roy (the King's Brewery) at Quebec City in 1668.

Talon hoped to solve a shortage of safe drinking water while making use of a grain surplus and competing with imported liquors to keep money in the colony. His brewery even produced beer for export, but lasted only a few years. Others that followed were similarly short-lived and brewing remained mostly a cottage industry over the next century.

The eighteenth-century arrival of British soldiers, who were entitled to six pints of beer a day, changed brewing in Canada. Small breweries and brew pubs thrived wherever there was a military post, while United Empire Loyalists brought English traditions to Upper Canada and the Maritimes. The Canadian taste for ales and other heavier beers, as opposed to the German-derived lagers popular in the U.S., can be traced to this time.

Brewing and malting were cool-weather activities farmers could engage in during the off-season, and at one point in the nineteenth century there were over three hundred small breweries in Ontario alone. English-born John Molson established the oldest among surviving Canadian brewing enterprises in Montreal in 1786.

— Phil Koch



An ad from Boswell's, a now defunct Quebec brewery that was established on the same site as Jean Talon's La Brasserie du Roy.

CANADIAN PRESS

Above: A 1916 prohibition parade in Toronto.

Opposite page: *Envy me in Canada*, a 1931 American anti-prohibition cartoon.

To make matters worse, while the brewers were becoming increasingly divided, the prohibitionists were becoming more united. Furthermore, the prohibitionists realized something the brewers did not: this was a cultural battle as much as a political one; a fight for the hearts and minds of Canadians, as much as for having influence in the corridors of power.

As early as 1875, Francis Spence recognized this was going to be a long war. Culture and morality would take time to change. The prohibitionists might lose battles along the way, he thought, but by changing mindsets they would ultimately win the war. Prohibitionists kept driving home the message that the liquor traffic had to go. Alcohol, they said, caused poverty, misery, crime, poor health, and insanity.

In the 1890s, prohibitionists worked to have this message heard by the most impressionable members of society. "Health Readers" began to appear in Canadian schools, filled with prohibitionist propaganda. On reading a description of the alleged effect of beer on the heart, the young reader was warned that "the heart bears this abuse as long as it can and when it stops — the beer drinker is dead."

The brewers counterattacked with ads that promised better health with beer. "Good health will be yours if you drink O'Keefe's Bold Label Ale," one advertisement read. "Not only a drink that refreshes," read another, promoting Vancouver Breweries' Cascade beer, "but one that tones up the system, builds body strength and brain efficiency." Carling's beer was advertised as "highly recommended by the medical community."

Yet it seemed even the brewers themselves didn't completely believe their own claims. Were they being worn down by the prohibitionist rhetoric? In the twilight of his career, John Carling spent much of his time lobbying for government funds to build an insane asylum, perhaps motivated by a sense of guilt and the prohibitionist rhetoric linking alcohol consumption to insanity. The ambivalence of brewers to their own profession was further reflected during the 1892 Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic, appointed to study the feasibility of a national prohibition law. When asked if they would give up their business if compensated, roughly half of the brewers stated they would. Some talked openly about the moral strain of operating a brewery in "temperate times."

But the greatest strategic failing was the brewers' unwillingness to build a broad-based coalition capable of drowning out the dry voices in society. Many would be negatively affected by Prohibition: labourers, farmers, hotel and tavern owners, barrel makers, bottlers, shippers, vintners, and distillers. Yet the brewers didn't reach out to them.

The case was different in England. In reaction to vehement attacks by teetotallers in Victorian times, brewers and publicans joined with working-class drinkers and moderate reformers to prevent government support of anti-drink legislation. This success might have served as a model for Canadian brewers — many of whom, like Carling, were of British stock. But they took no notice.

Take one down, pass it around

When Canadians think of the quintessentially Canadian beer bottle, they think of the short, brown "stubby," which was phased out by big breweries in 1986 in favour of the taller, slimmer American-style bottles. However, throughout Canada's history, beer has been hoisted in a host of colourful containers. Here are just a few examples:

When Labatt's Pilsener Lager came out in 1951, Manitobans nicknamed it "Blue" for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers football team that Labatt sponsored. The name stuck.

Brewers would have found an ally in the Canadian working class, which was overwhelmingly against the idea of full-fledged prohibition. Increasingly, workers argued they had a constitutional right to drink beer. Tapping into this sentiment, labour leaders told their governments that prohibitionist legislation would force thousands out of work. Despite the strong working-class opposition, the brewing industry was unwilling to unite with labour to prevent prohibition.

Certainly the idea of cozying up to labour was somewhat lost on Konrad Knapp. In the months leading to the liquidation of Mountain Springs' assets, Knapp wrote, "I cannot think what else I might do [to retain the business]." Knapp was wont to blame himself for his firm's failings. But in reality, it had as much to do with society at large. As he acknowledged, the prohibitionists were putting him out of business. What he did not recognize was the self-inflicted wound administered by the brewing community on itself. Had the brewers been more united, less defensive, and more willing to reach out to other anti-prohibitionists in society, they might well have had beer — which was once considered a temperance drink — exempted from prohibitionist legislation.

From a nineteenth-century perspective, this was a very un-Canadian tale. Usually, business successfully lobbied government for the public policies it wanted. But in the case of the beer wars, the brewing industry ultimately failed to persuade the government to do its bidding.

From another perspective, however, the story was very Canadian. In the years following Confederation, the fragile Canadian nation was divided along regional, religious, and socio-economic lines. These divisions were omnipresent during the beer wars, dividing those within the brewing industry. Men like Konrad Knapp were trapped between their wallets and their social register. Steelmakers had no moral qualms about making steel because steel made nations. But did beer make nations? Or did it cause national decay? Knapp and most other Canadian brewers were increasingly uncertain. As a result, they served up a watered-down response to the threat of prohibition.

Matthew Bellamy is a history professor with Carleton University in Ottawa. He is the author of two books on business history and won the 2005 National Business Book Award.

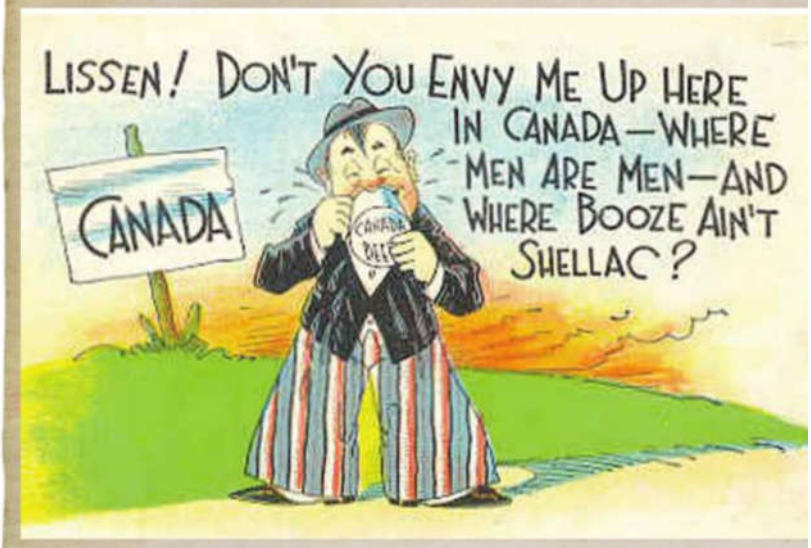
Et Cetera

The Molson Saga, 1763-1983: The Triumphs and Tragedies of the Legendary Brewing Family Through Six Generations by Shirley E. Woods, Jr. Avon Books of Canada, Scarborough, Ontario, 1983.

House of Suds: A History of Beer Brewing in Western Canada by William A. Hagelund. Hancock House Publishers, Surrey, B.C., 2003.

High spirits

Canadians have long been consumed by alcohol.



Foxy wine: In 1811 a retired German soldier, Johann Schiller, became the "father of Canadian wine" when he planted a small vineyard just west of York (Toronto). However, the only grape varieties available at the time for this climate had a "foxy" taste that was only tolerable in port- and sherry-style wines.

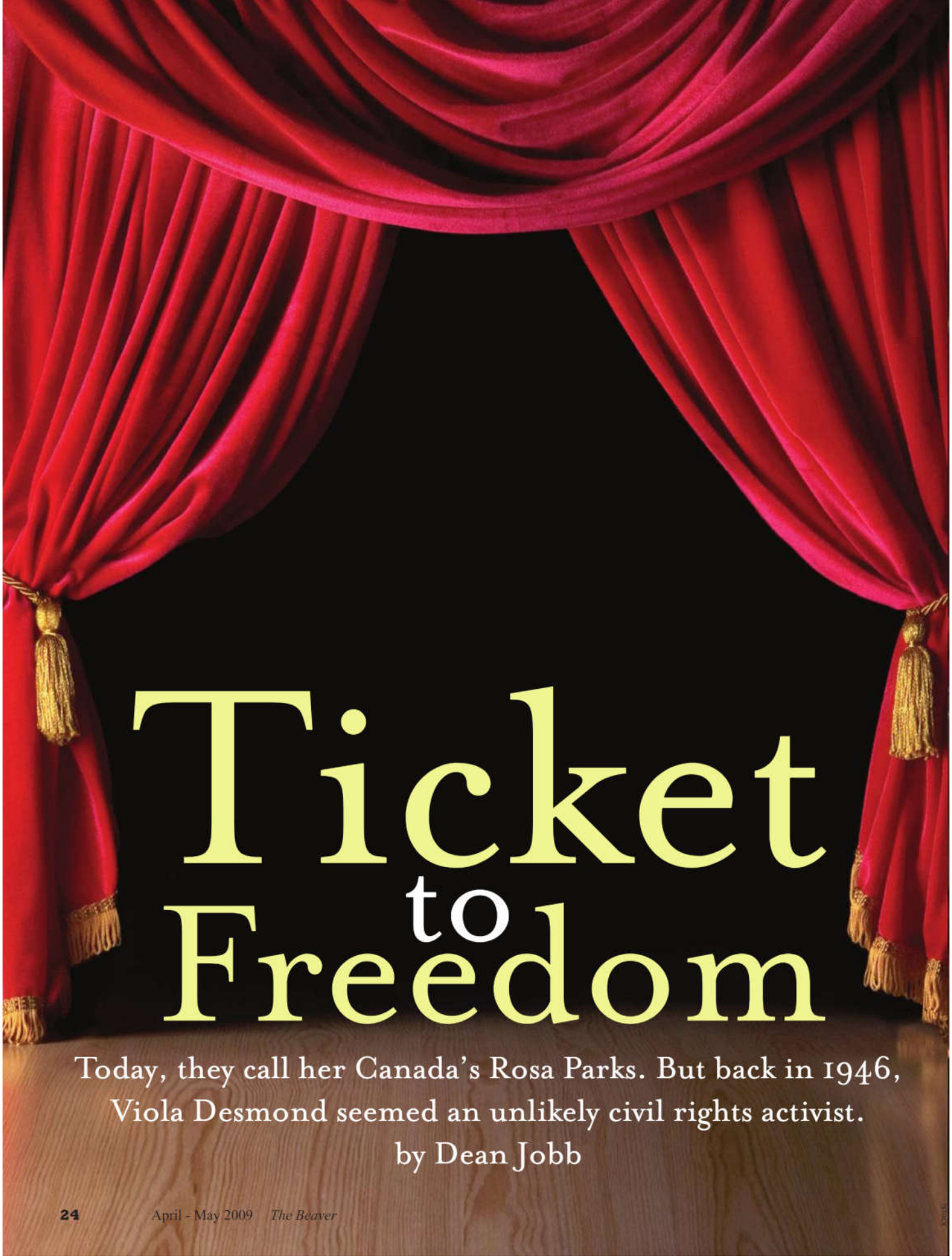
Beer with buzz: Before prohibition, there was no such thing as "lite" beer. Its alcohol content ranged from eight to twelve percent, yet it was considered a "temperance drink." A standard Canadian beer today is five percent.

Rum in the trenches: During the Great War, Canadian infantrymen were issued two ounces at dawn and two ounces at dusk. There was extra rum for those who went beyond the call of duty. A Private G. Boyd, who was at Passchendaele in 1917, said, "if we had not had the rum we would have died."

Party-pooper: Edwin Clarke Appleby ran in the 1930 federal election in Canada as a Prohibition Party candidate in Vancouver-Burrard. A watchman by trade, Appleby came in dead last with 266 votes (0.8 percent of the popular vote).

Party animal: Carl Borden Campbell ran in 1979 Prince Edward Island election as a Draft Beer Party candidate, receiving 200 votes in a province that had not brewed its own beer since prohibition. There is now one small brewery on the island.

Do you collect old beer bottles or labels? If so, send us photos of your collection and we will post them online. Email photos to: editors@historysociety.ca.



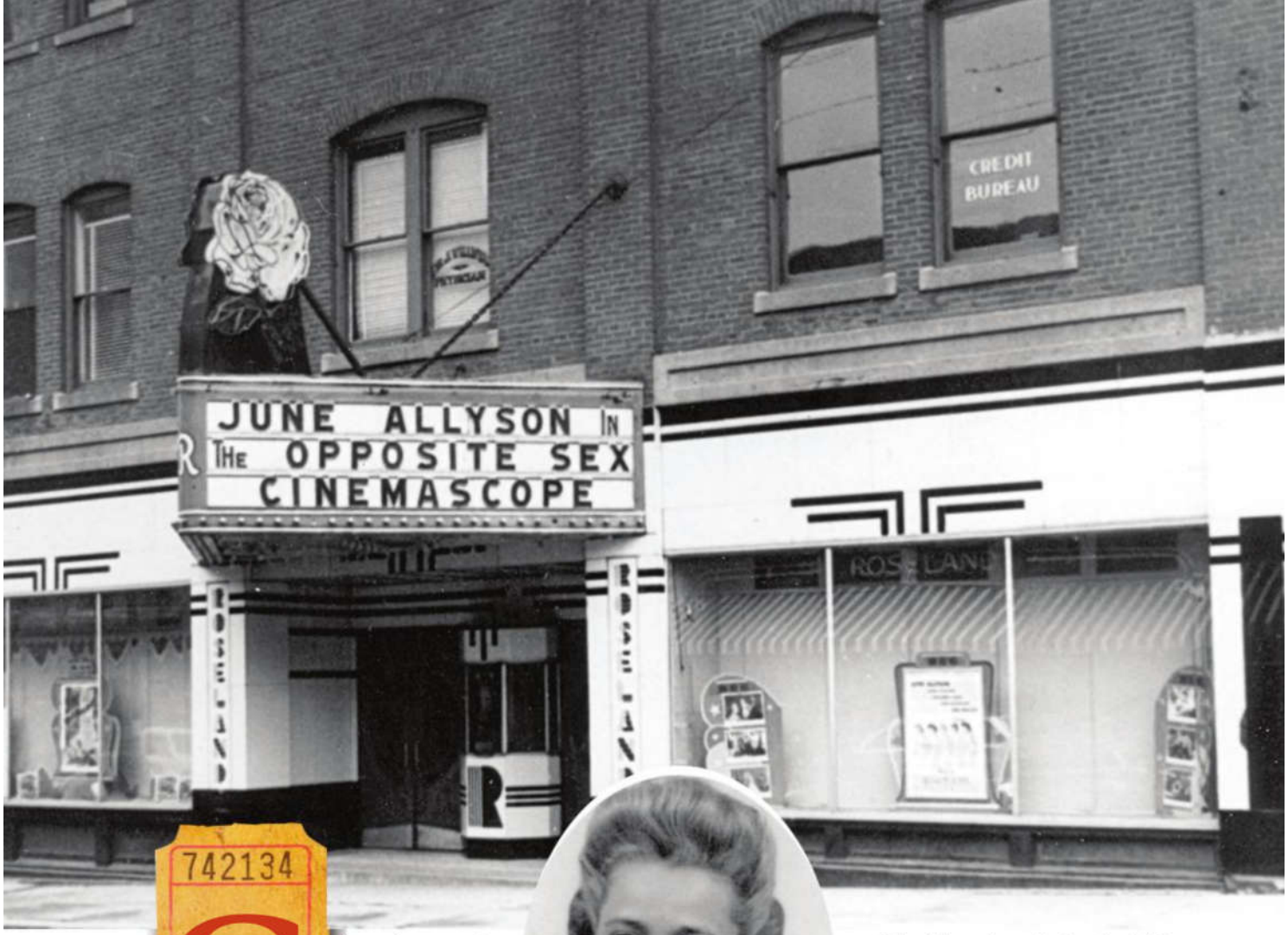
Ticket to Freedom

Today, they call her Canada's Rosa Parks. But back in 1946, Viola Desmond seemed an unlikely civil rights activist.

by Dean Jobb

Wanda Robson holding a portrait of her older sister Viola in the Savoy Theatre in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia.

STEVE WADEN



She only wanted to watch a movie.

It was November 8, 1946, a Friday, and Viola Desmond was travelling on business when her Dodge sedan broke down in New Glasgow, a coal-and-steel centre of about 9,500 in northern Nova Scotia. The car could not be fixed until the following day, leaving the petite thirty-two-year-old beautician and businesswoman — she ran Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture on Gottingen Street in Halifax — stranded in a strange town.

Desmond headed downtown to take in the seven o'clock show at the Roseland Theatre. She handed the cashier, Peggy Melanson, a dollar bill. "One down please," she said. Melanson gave her a ticket and change. At the door, Desmond passed the ticket to the usher, Prima Davis, and began looking for a seat in the orchestra section.

What happened next sparked allegations of discrimination that would culminate in a legal battle before Nova Scotia's highest court and make Viola Desmond's name synonymous with the fight for racial equality in Canada.

"The ticket-taker called me back," Desmond recalled, "saying, 'this is an upstairs ticket and you have to go upstairs.'"

Thinking the cashier had sold her the wrong ticket, Desmond returned to the wicket. But Melanson refused to make an exchange.

"I'm sorry," she said, by Desmond's account, "but I'm not permitted to sell downstairs tickets to you people."

You people. Finally, she understood what was going on.

Desmond's father was black, her was mother white, but her dark skin and mixed-race heritage meant, to the outside world, she was *black*. And in 1940s Canada, she knew that could mean being treated like a second-class citizen.

Desmond had taught briefly at segregated schools in the Halifax area and had gone to Montreal and New York to train as a beautician because none of Halifax's beauty colleges would admit a black woman. But demanding that blacks sit in the balcony, away from whites? "Nothing like this ever happened to me before," she later told a Canadian Press reporter. "I've found relations between negroes and whites very pleasant. I didn't realize a thing like this could happen in Nova Scotia — or in any other part of Canada."

Desmond returned to the orchestra section and took a seat. The usher again asked her to go upstairs, then summoned the manager, Henry MacNeil. Desmond told him she never sat in the balcony because she found it hard to see the screen from a distance.

MacNeil's anger rose as Desmond's stubbornness grew. He said he had the right to refuse admission to "any objectionable person" and could have her thrown out. Desmond said she had not been refused admission — the cashier had refused to sell her a downstairs ticket. She asked MacNeil to sell her one, ignoring his threat to have her ejected. "As I was behaving very quietly," she later explained, "I didn't think he could."

MacNeil left and returned within a few minutes with a policeman. Desmond again refused to leave. The officer grabbed her by the shoulders and dragged her to the lobby so violently her legs and hip were bruised. She almost lost one of her shoes and a bystander had to retrieve her purse. It was an ugly scene: a stylishly dressed woman weighing less than a hundred pounds and just under five feet tall roughed up by a police officer likely twice her size. In the lobby, MacNeil grabbed her legs and the two men carried her to a waiting car. She was whisked off to the town jail for the night.

Desmond spent twelve hours in New Glasgow's lock-up, with a ringside seat as the night's haul of drunks and petty criminals filled the cellblock. MacNeil and Police Chief Elmo Langille showed up with a warrant for her arrest on a trumped-up charge of failing to pay tax on her ticket, an offence under the province's Theatres, Cinemagraphs and Amusements Act. Desmond had been sold a thirty-cent upstairs ticket, which included a two-cent tax, but the downstairs seat she insisted on taking cost forty cents and included a tax of three cents. Desmond stood accused of evading a penny in tax.

Desmond appeared before magistrate Rod MacKay the following morning and pleaded not guilty. A short trial followed. The cashier testified she sold Desmond an upstairs ticket; the usher recounted how she tried to get her to move from her downstairs seat. Neither woman mentioned Desmond's offer to pay the difference in price. MacNeil, the manager, said he called the police after she refused to sit upstairs.

Desmond had no idea how to respond. "I was not told by the magistrate that I had the right to have counsel, nor was I told that I had the right to have an adjournment and be bailed," she later complained. After each prosecution witness testified, MacKay asked if she had any questions, but she thought he meant about the process. "I did not gather until almost the end of the case that he meant questions to be asked of the witnesses."

The prosecution rested and Desmond took the stand. "I offered to pay the difference in the price between the tickets," she testified. "They would not accept it." Those were the only words MacKay recorded in his notes. Desmond insisted she also told the magistrate she was "being tried for being a negress and not for any felony." She was not invited to make a closing argument. MacKay found her guilty and imposed the minimum penalty — a twenty-dollar fine or thirty days in jail — plus six dollars in costs.

The photo below shows the graduating class of Desmond's beauty college. She is on the far left in the front row.

TONY COLAIACOVO

Desmond had been sold a thirty-cent upstairs ticket, which included a two-cent tax, but the downstairs seat she insisted on taking cost forty cents and included a tax of three cents. Desmond stood accused of evading a penny in tax.

The theatre in New Glasgow were Viola Desmond was arrested, as it appeared in 1956 (opposite page).

Viola Desmond, as she appeared in ad material for her own beauty products (opposite page).

TONY COLAIACOVO

1947. Crown Side.

IN THE SUPREME COURT

IN BANCO

BETWEEN: HIS MAJESTY THE KING, on the information and complaint of Henry MacNeil; RESPONDENT

-and-

VIOLA IRENE DESMOND, APPELLANT.

AFFIDAVIT OF VIOLA IRENE DESMOND

I, Viola Irene Desmond of Halifax, in the County of Halifax, Married Woman, make oath and say as follows:

1. That I am a Beautician by occupation doing business in the City of Halifax.

2. That I arrived in New Glasgow in the County of Pictou on Friday the 8th day of November, A.D., 1946, on business and at about 7 p. m. went to the Roseland Theatre in that Town alone to attend the performance.

3. That I asked the ticket seller for "one down please" meaning a ticket for the downstairs and thinking I had such a ticket I went to the ticket taker and tendered her the ticket. She accepted it, handed me the stub, and I walked in towards the downstairs, she called me back and said, "this is an upstairs ticket, you will have to go upstairs". I then tried to get the ticket exchanged but the ticket seller refused saying, "I am not permitted to sell upstairs tickets to you". I then proceeded to the downstairs part of the theatre and took a seat there.

4. That after I occupied, quietly, the seat in the downstairs part of the theatre for a few minutes the ticket taker came and said, "I told you to go upstairs". I refused to go and then the Manager Henry MacNeil came and said that I had been told to go upstairs and had I

TONY COLAIACOVO

Viola Desmond's affidavit (right) stating she was refused a downstairs theatre ticket.

The Clarion **(below right) covered Desmond's story.**

Desmond paid up, picked up her car, and drove home. The doctor who treated her for her bruises suggested she see a lawyer, so she consulted Frederick W. Bissett, who would one day be appointed to the provincial Supreme Court. The newly formed Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People agreed to pay her legal fees and Bissett sued the Roseland's manager for false arrest, false imprisonment, and malicious prosecution.

The arrest outraged Nova Scotia's black leaders, who saw it as an attempt to import the segregationist Jim Crow laws of the American South. The goal of the lawsuit, said Pearleen Oliver, a member of NSAACP's executive, was to prevent "a spread of colour-bar tactics in Nova Scotia." Carrie M. Best, crusading editor of *The Clarion*, a black newspaper based in New Glasgow, condemned Desmond's "disgraceful" arrest as proof the town "stands for Jim-Crowism, at its basest."

In the 1940s, Nova Scotia was home to almost half of Canada's 20,000 blacks, a community that traced its roots to the black Loyalist migrations of the 1780s. Most lived in the Halifax area; in smaller towns like New Glasgow, they had settled in enclaves on the edge of town. While segregation was not officially sanctioned in Canada in the 1940s, black people were turned away from some hotels, restaurants, bars, theatres, and even parks and beaches. In 1945, Quebec's Chateau Frontenac hotel was sued for excluding two black tourists, a New York doctor and his wife, from its dining room and bar. In New Glasgow, Henry MacNeil insisted blacks were not barred from the downstairs section of his theatre; it was, he claimed, merely "customary for them to sit together in the balcony."

Desmond did not have the law on her side. Canada's first human rights legislation was introduced in 1947, the year after her arrest, when Saskatchewan became the first jurisdiction to outlaw discrimination on the basis of race. Meanwhile, Canadian courts recognized the right of proprietors to restrict those using their premises, and this likely prompted Bissett to abandon Desmond's lawsuit. He applied instead to the Supreme Court for an order quashing the conviction, arguing an "obvious injustice" had been done and there was insufficient evidence to support the charge.

It was a tactical error, transforming a potential showdown over racial discrimination into a dry debate over legal procedure. Justice Maynard Archibald rejected the motion, saying Desmond should have appealed her conviction. Bissett acknowledged he had inadvertently allowed the appeal deadline to pass; now, his only option was to ask the full bench of the Supreme Court to review Archibald's ruling.

The court handed down its judgment in May 1947. The four judges wrote separate rulings but agreed they had no power to intervene. Two judges were sympathetic to Desmond's mistreatment, but only Justice William Lorimer Hall confronted the issue of race. Had the conviction been appealed directly, "there might have been opportunity to right the wrong done this unfortunate woman," he observed. "One wonders," he added, "if the manager of the theatre … was so zealous because of a bona fide belief there had been an attempt to defraud the Province of Nova Scotia of the sum of one cent, or was it a surreptitious endeavour to enforce a Jim Crow rule by misuse of a public statute."

Desmond lost in the courts, but her fight galvanized public opinion. *Saturday Night* magazine called the conviction "a travesty of justice" and urged Canadians to resist emulating the racial segregation "so deeply entrenched" in the United States. "Is This a Free Country?" the lead editorial in the July 15, 1947 issue of *Maclean's* magazine asked, citing Desmond's arrest, the jailing of Quebec strike leaders, and the wartime internment of Japanese Canadians as evidence it was not. "Most Canadians have been doing a fair amount of grumbling lately about the state of our fun-

THE CLARION

Published in the Interest of Colored Nova Scotians

VOL. 1, NO 1 NEW GLASGOW, N. S. 1946 DECEMBR.

Locals

The Season's Greetings to All Our Readers

Mr. and Mrs. Jason MacPhee have moved into their new home on South Albert Street.

Calbert Best, student at King's College, Halifax, will spend the Christmas recess with his parents Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Best.

Congratulations are being extended to Rev. and Mrs. Thomas for their Christmas Calendar. It is a lovely job!

Miss Evelyn Williams, daughter of Mr. Samuel Williams, stenographer with the Fuel Board Department at Ottawa, will be home on Dec. 20th to spend the Christmas holidays with her family.

Friends will be interested to know that Miss Thelma Pierre, formerly of this town, has become an American citizen. She is making her home in Cambridge, where her mother Mrs. Douglas Gordon, resides.

The Ladies Auxiliary of Second Baptist Church held a successful sale and tea in the Church Hall on Dec. 4th. A handsome display of fancy work was noted.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Miller left Saturday, Dec. 14, for Boston, where they will spend Christmas with their daughters, Mrs. Theodore Harper and Mrs. Bennie Shepherd.

Johnnie Mills met a deer—DEER that is, recently, while coming his mother to Halifax. The deer darted out on the highway near Elmsdale and hit the side of the car. Not seriously injured, the deer was carried off some distance by the force of the impact.

Word has been received that Miss Irene Rutherford will be married on the 31st to John Wade Prescod in Mary A student of Mount Allison School of Music. Miss Rutherford is a organist of promise, and that she will make a comfortable charming lass without saying.

The Junior B. Y. P. U. of Second Baptist Church elected a fine and talented to Directors where they hold a service in the vestry of the Pictou County Home. Among those who took part were Rev. D. Thomas, Howard Lawrence, Miss Alma Lawrence and Mrs. Gordon Clark. About twenty five persons made the trip.

The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Second Baptist Church had a surprise party recently in honour of Rev. and Mrs. Thomas at the Parsonage Washington St. The gifts included china, linen etc., and each gift was accompanied by an original verse. Friend of the rector, was the one secret

MRS. VIOLA DESMOND

Takes Action

Mrs. Viola Desmond, 32 year-old Negro Halifax beauty parlour proprietor and head hair and scalp specialist for Max Factor of this town, for sitting downstairs in the Roseland Theatre while holding an upstairs ticket.

Mrs. Desmond was fined for defrauding the Provincial Government of one cent, the difference in the Amusement tax on an upstairs ticket of two cents and a downstairs ticket of three cents.

Counsel for Mrs. Desmond, F. W. Bissett of Halifax, has entered a writ against Henry MacNeil manager of the theatre, charging false arrest, false imprisonment, assault and malicious prosecution.

K. M. Macdonald, K.C., of New Glasgow is acting for Mr. MacNeil.

Mrs. Desmond, the former Viola Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Davis, of Halifax, is well known throughout the Province. She is a graduate of the Halifax High School and is also a graduate in Beauty Culture from a leading Beauty College in New York. She is a member of the Dorcas Civil Service Sorority (Post Office Division) Halifax.

Viola Desmond's Appeal

And so we go to press we are in receipt of a letter from Mrs. Bernice Williams, Sec'y N. S. A. A. C. P., informing us that an appeal fund of the Viola Desmond case will be held in Halifax on Dec. 17th, when a Viola Desmond Court Fund has been established by the Association soliciting our

Did You Know?

(a) That adult education in rural communities is being sponsored by the N. S. A. A. C. P.

(b) That the Educational Department of the Province of Nova Scotia is supporting the movement.

(c) That a class has already started in Normandie Plains and is progressing harmonies.

(d) That the C. G. I. T. group of Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, Halifax, raised the sum of $25.00 at their Christmas Sale. Mrs. Oliver is leader and all girls are under 16 years.

(e) That the money will be used for the needs of the Summer Camp at Fall River.

(f) That Mr. Mathews, of Fall River, gave the use of an island near the Cornwallis Street Church camp site for the promotion of the Young People's work of that Church.

(g) That two Colored girls are enrolled as student nurses at the Halifax Infirmary. They are Miss Gwendolyn Ross of Halifax and Miss Ruth Bailey of Toronto.

(h) That J. Calbert Best of King's College, Halifax, will act as the Maritime Associate, one of the largest weekly Negro newspapers in the U. S. A. Mr. Best has been asked to prepare a 700 word article on Canada. The weekly circulation of the Afro is 200,000.

The N. S. A. A. C. P.

The Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of the Colored People was organized in 1945.

(a) To improve and further the interest of the Colored people of the Province.

(b) To secure and maintain a spirit of fraternity among its members.

(c) To co-operate with Governmental and private agencies for the promotion of the interest and the welfare of the Province or any community, wherein Colored People are subject, and particularly in reference to said Colored people.

(d) To improve the educational opportunities of Colored youth and to raise the standard of the Colored people of the Province or any community thereof.

(e) The following people comprise the charter members of the Association.

Arnold F. Smith, Richard Symonds, Lillian Carter, Bernice A. Williams, Carl W. Oliver, Walter Johnson, Pearleen Oliver, William F. Oliver and Ernest

TONY COLAIACOVO

damental freedoms," the writer noted. "Maybe it's time we did more than grumble." A *Globe and Mail* editorial on the case asserted that colour bans had "no place" in Canada.

In Nova Scotia, Carrie Best expressed disappointment with the ruling but took comfort in Justice Hall's comments. "It is gratifying to know that such a shoddy attempt to hide behind the law has been recognized as such by the highest court in our province," she wrote in *The Clarion*. In future, she predicted, discriminatory admission rules would be recognized as "cowardly devices to persecute innocent people" based on "outmoded racial biases."

The Desmond case "touched a nerve within the black community, creating a dramatic upsurge in race consciousness," notes legal historian Constance Backhouse. Bissett waived his fee, perhaps out of guilt for botching the appeal, and the NSAACP used money raised for Desmond's defence to fight discrimination.

"Neither before nor since has there been such an aggressive effort to obtain rights," black leader William Oliver, Pearleen's husband, said of the Desmond case years later. "This positive stand enhanced the prestige of the Negro community throughout the province." And beyond. Desmond became known as "Canada's Rosa Parks," after the Alabama woman whose 1955 arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger galvanized the U.S. civil rights movement.

After the failed court challenge, Desmond continued to work as a beautician. She was only fifty when she died in February 1965 while on a trip to New York. Her obituary in the Halifax *Chronicle-Herald* made no reference to the Roseland incident, nor to her fight for equality. But she will soon receive the recognition she deserves. Her case is expected to be among the featured exhibits when the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opens in Winnipeg in 2010.

Rosa Parks challenged segregation eight years *after* Desmond's act of defiance. She should perhaps be remembered as "America's Viola Desmond."

Dean Jobb, an assistant professor of journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, is author of *The Acadians: A People's Story of Exile and Triumph*. Raincoast Books will publish his next book, *Prince of Fraud*, which follows the exploits of an American swindler on the lam in 1920s Nova Scotia.

Et Cetera

Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950 by Constance Backhouse. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999.

Viola Desmond Won't be Budged, a children's book (for ages nine to twelve) by Jody Nyasha Warner and Bushira Junaid. Groundwood Books, Toronto, 2009.

To hear Viola Desmond's story, as told by her sister Wanda Robson, go to TheBeaver.ca.

The legacy of Viola Desmond

Viola Desmond's refusal to give up her seat in a Nova Scotia theatre back in 1946 sent out a shock wave that continues to be felt more than five decades later.

The event galvanized the local African-Canadian community in a way never before seen in Canada.

It focused the newly formed Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples, which paid Desmond's fine and supported her court fight.

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Viola Desmond (right) and her sister Wanda circa 1944.

It inspired the creation of an independent black newspaper, *The Clarion*, whose editor, Carrie Best, almost single-handedly brought attention to an event that could easily have been ignored.

Best and other activists continued a fight that finally led to a repeal of segregationist policies in Nova Scotia in 1954.

But most significantly, Viola Desmond's example has inspired generations of African-Canadians, especially in Nova Scotia, which has Canada's longest-standing black community (the first black person arrived there in the early 1600s).

"I feel a great sense of pride for what she did," says Wanda Robson, who is Viola Desmond's younger sister. "She wasn't doing it for herself or her family. It was a fight against injustice brought on by the colour of a person's skin. I think what she did helped lay a foundation for young people growing up today."

Robson, who is eighty-two and lives in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, is frequently asked to tell Desmond's story to students in schools in the province. A natural storyteller, she holds their attention.

"Some of them might have heard snippets of the story before. They will often ask me very good questions."

Robson is quick to point out that she was not as assertive as her sister, who was thirteen years her senior. Yet, later on in life, Robson felt the influence of her older sibling.

"One of my children was having something going on at school that was completely wrong and based on his race, and I attended to it and I did not let it go," Robson said. "Formerly, I think I would have been angry and complained to my friends, but I don't think I would have done anything about it."

Robson, who graduated with a bachelor of arts degree at Cape Breton University at the age of seventy-seven, has told her sister's story many times and is working on an autobiography that focuses on her memories of Viola and what it was like for her to grow up as a black person in Nova Scotia.

— **Nelle Oosterom**

MAKING NOISE

Many of Hollywood's most distinctive, Oscar-winning sound effects were the work of a little-known Canadian. by Susan Goldenberg

Attention movie buffs: Who made Leo the Lion — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's trademark seen at the beginning of all its films — roar? And who created the piercing yell of Tarzan the Ape Man?

Congratulations if you knew it was a Canadian: Montreal-born movie sound production wizard Douglas Shearer. Shearer won a total of nine Academy Awards, tying for fifth place overall for the most Oscars won by an individual. (Walt Disney is No. 1 with twenty-six.) He also founded MGM's sound department in 1928 and headed it for forty years.

Yet, while certainly a bright light as a film pioneer, Douglas Shearer never became as well-known as his sister. Norma Shearer was in her day one of the most popular actresses in the world — at times outshining names such as Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford.

At the 1929–30 Academy Awards, the brother-sister team were the first to make Oscar-winning a family affair. She won the best actress for *The Divorcee*, in which a wife turns the table on her cheating husband by having an affair with his best friend. He won for overseeing the sound effects in the prison drama *The Big House* — a movie praised for the way it portrayed the stamp of prisoners' feet keeping time with background music and the clang of closing prison doors.

The Shearers were the toast of Hollywood that year. No doubt they cherished their success, for it had been a hard climb for both of them. Now that they were on top they faced new challenges — and personal difficulties — in what was then the brave new world of the motion picture business.

Douglas Shearer was born November 17, 1899. His sister Athole followed a year later and Norma came along in 1902. Their father, Andrew Shearer, inherited a prosperous lumber business and the children grew up knowing a life of privilege and security in Montreal's wealthy Westmount district.

Then came the Great War.

During the closing months of World War I, eighteen-year-old

CORBIS

Sound engineer Douglas Shearer shows his sister, Academy Award-winning actor Norma Shearer, a wax disk recording of her voice.

Above: Douglas Shearer (right), Greta Garbo, and William Daniels on the set of *Anna Christie* in 1930.

Right: Norma Shearer in 1925.

Douglas volunteered for the air force. However, he fell ill with the Spanish flu and his recovery came too late for him to serve.

The family's comfortable existence began to unravel after the war. Andrew Shearer sold his company at a depressed price during a postwar economic downturn. Then he lost more money in bad investments. As the family's fortunes crumbled, Andrew's wife Edith left him, taking her daughters with her.

No longer able to afford university, where he wanted to study engineering, Douglas Shearer instead became a power plant equipment salesman. He worked for the Northern Electric Company (later called Nortel), calling it "a substitute for a university education. I came in touch with top mechanical engineers and supervisors at big industries all over Canada who were great teachers." Ironically, Northern Electric was on the site of his grandfather's first lumberyard.

As his fortunes improved, Douglas was soon able to live on his own. And he was able to pay for his ambitious and talented sister Norma to travel to New York, where she pursued modelling and then acting. A talent scout from Louis B. Mayer Pictures took notice, and she arrived in Hollywood in 1923, the year before Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures, and Mayer Pictures merged to form MGM.

It was a big break for Norma, and it also benefited Douglas. During a visit to Hollywood in 1925 to see his sister, Norma gave a dinner party at which Jack Warner of Warner Brothers was present. Warner offered Douglas a job as a prop man, starting at $30 a week. Douglas accepted. Although he could have started with MGM — Norma's studio — he did not want to work there at first because he feared accusations of nepotism. However, it wasn't long before he left Warner Brothers and moved to MGM's camera department, becoming an expert in special effects.

The Montreal-born siblings had arrived in Hollywood just before the film industry underwent a major transformation — the end of the era of silent movies and the introduction of talkies.

In August 1927, Norma married Irving Thalberg, MGM's production chief. The union was to prove beneficial for both of the Shearers' careers. At the wedding supper, the brother of the bride confidently predicted that talking pictures were the coming thing. No one paid attention to Douglas Shearer's prophetic words then, but two months later the first talkie — Warners' *The Jazz Singer* — opened. And it was a sensation.

The advent of sound was not really a surprise to most people in the movie industry, of course. Experiments in sound technology had been going on in Hollywood since the mid-1920s — but not at MGM. Studio chief Louis Mayer did not believe in experimentation and was concerned about how much it would cost to convert to sound. Besides, MGM had had a lot of success with silents.

Thalberg was as complacent as his boss. He told associates, "*The Jazz Singer* was a good gimmick, but that's all it was." But after rival studios had more talkie successes, Thalberg reluctantly changed course. He knew he would have to hire someone to bring the studio up-to-date on sound, yet he wasn't convinced he needed a high-priced expert.

"His lack of conviction is reflected in the decision to ask his brother-in-law, Douglas Shearer, to form a sound department," movie historian Roland Flamini wrote in his 1994 biography *Thalberg*. "Shearer was an engineer with a keen interest in electronics, but he had no knowledge of sound techniques. A Thalberg who was focusing on the problem would have scoured the country for the leading expert and, in the best MGM tradition, hired him regardless of cost. Fortunately for MGM, Douglas Shearer was both thorough and resourceful."

MADE IN CANADA

Many of early Hollywood's brightest lights had Canadian roots.

Mary Pickford
America's Sweetheart was actually a Canadian. Born Gladys Smith in Toronto on April 8, 1892, she first appeared onstage at age five. Her widowed mother, an actress, moved the family to New York in 1900. Pickford went on to appear in almost 250 films and won an Oscar for 1929's *Coquette*. Known for her business savvy, she co-founded film company United Artists in 1919. Married three times, she insisted on retaining her Canadian citizenship. She died in Beverly Hills, California, in 1979.

Fay Wray
The "beauty that killed the beast" was born near Cardston, Alberta, on September 15, 1907. When she was a child, her father moved the large family to Arizona, then to California. In Los Angeles she began working in low-budget movies while still in her teens. Wray played the lead in the well-regarded 1928 silent film *The Wedding March*. She earned the nickname Queen of Scream for her role in the famous horror movie *King Kong* in 1933. She died in Manhattan in 2004.

Jack Warner
This big-time Hollywood producer was named Jack Eichelbaum when he was born August 2, 1892, in London, Ontario. He was the youngest of twelve children in a Jewish immigrant family from Poland. The Eichelbaums later settled in Ohio, where Jack's father changed the family's last name. Jack and his brothers Harry, Sam, and Albert started producing their own films in 1912. Together, they founded Warner Brothers in 1923. Warner died in Los Angeles in 1978.

Walter Pidgeon
This quintessentially tall, dark, and handsome actor was born September 23, 1897, in Saint John, New Brunswick. Walter Pidgeon married his high school sweetheart and followed her to Boston, where she was studying art. Tragically, Pidgeon's wife died in childbirth a few years later. Pidgeon was discovered by Fred Astaire. Nominated twice for a best actor Oscar, he continued performing until he was eighty. Pidgeon died in Santa Monica, California, in 1984.

Jay Silverheels
The Lone Ranger's "faithful Indian companion, Tonto" was born Harold Jay Smith, the son of a Mohawk chief, on May 26, 1912, on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. An athletic young man, his uncle nicknamed him "Silverheels" for his running style. While competing in a lacrosse tournament in Hollywood, he found work as a stuntman and extra. That eventually led to his role as Tonto in *The Lone Ranger* in 1949. Silverheels died in Calabasas, California, in 1980.

—Jen Clark

At just twenty-eight, Douglas Shearer was suddenly the head of a major movie studio's very important new sound department.

"Mayer and Thalberg ordered me to do the job," Douglas later recalled. "They didn't just give it to me." He went to Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, where the latest equipment was being developed, "to see what I could learn." Then he put together a crew, which he "stole from every which where. I had a guy from Bell, another from somewhere else, a few from the colleges."

This lion, named Jackie, provided the first audible roar for MGM's Leo the Lion logo in the 1928 movie *White Shadows in the South Seas.*

With his new team, Shearer set about creating a new world. As long-time MGM story editor Samuel Marx recalled in his 1975 book *Mayer and Thalberg*: "Labourers dug tunnels, burying miles of criss-crossing wires, linking the studio's stages to a mysterious edifice where varieties of sound could be combined into a single track of celluloid. From Shearer's newly hired experts a strange, frightening jargon was heard, talk of timbre, resonance, diphthongs, intonation, audibility, tone, sonance, articulation, and decibels. Dialogue had to be recorded free of extraneous sounds. To muffle the whir of the camera, cinematographers arranged to function inside boxes resembling telephone booths. Art directors designed sets in which they could hide microphones in lamps, ashtrays, and vases or behind chairs and tables."

Starting with its silent film days in 1924, MGM has had a roaring lion as its logo at the beginning of its pictures. It was Shearer who first made it audible by inserting a phonograph recording of a lion's roar at the beginning of the otherwise silent 1928 film *White Shadows in the South Seas*. In all, MGM has had five trained lions, all officially called Leo, pose for its logo.

Another Shearer sound effect had a pig oink when hit with a broom. Shearer created the playback system whereby singing could be synchronized with already recorded music, thereby saving the studio the expense of hiring live musicians. It became standard Hollywood procedure.

Shearer was clear about the challenges he faced. "In radio the performer generally stands motionless before a microphone in acoustically perfect surroundings but in movies the microphone must remain at a constant distance yet out of sight of the camera," he wrote in an essay in the 1938 book *Behind The Screen: How Films Are Made*, which profiled the work of MGM's key department heads. "Differences in vocal quality must be taken into account if a person is facing the audience, in profile, turned away, sitting, standing, lying down, moving slowly or rapidly."

Douglas Shearer's many admirers said he gave MGM's sound "an unequalled clarity and spaciousness." He won a total of nine Academy Awards — two in special effects and seven in the science and technical category. He did not win in the sound category because during his career the award went to studios, not individuals. MGM won five Academy Awards for sound under Douglas.

Shearer's talents extended beyond acoustics. He also helped develop MGM's widescreen system and colour-process photography. During World War II, he did research on radar and atomic energy for the United States government. His friends included Albert Einstein. Yet all his success could not erase one particular sorrow.

In June 1931, Shearer's wife Marian committed suicide in a very bizarre and public way. According to *The New York Times*, "Mrs. Douglas Shearer, sister-in-law of Norma Shearer, ended her life with a target pistol as she stood in front of a shooting gallery on the amusement pier in Venice, California, yesterday. Renting a small calibre revolver from the gallery proprietor, she shot three times at moving objects. After the weap-

TRICKS OF THE SOUND TRADE

CANADIAN-BORN DOUGLAS SHEARER WAS A PIONEER IN

Nelson Eddy
"In his kind of songs the word 'heart' is apt to occur quite often," Shearer wrote. "It came through as 'haht.' Yet Eddy was singing 'heart' quite distinctly. At last the man at the sound controls found that if Eddy sang 'hoart' it came through as 'heart.'"

Jeanette MacDonald
"When she first sang for films, [she] was inclined to sway in time to the music she was singing," Shearer wrote. "That caused microphone trouble. She was asked to stand behind a chair, holding the back with her hands, which restricted her instinctive movements."

Robert Taylor
In *Broadway Melody of 1936*, Taylor was told to sing "I've Got A Feelin' You're Fooling" with his hands in his pockets because the microphone was picking up the fact he was unconsciously snapping his fingers in time.

on had been reloaded, she pressed the muzzle to her forehead and pulled the trigger. Douglas Shearer said she had been suffering ill health for several years."

Another report said Marian Shearer had been grieving the recent death of her mother.

For Shearer, it was one more tragic episode in a life afflicted by mental illness in his family. His father Andrew suffered "senile depression" and in the 1930s was committed to the psychopathic ward of the Los Angeles General Hospital by his second wife, who rejected his children's offer to pay for Andrew's care in a private home.

In her later years, Edith Shearer, Douglas's mother, became befuddled and was placed in a sanitarium for the elderly. Athole, the second-born sibling, suffered from bipolar disorder and was institutionalized for much of her life.

And as for Norma — Shearer's Academy Award-winning sister, who was once one of MGM's biggest box-office attractions — her career eventually faded into obscurity. Nominated for the Oscar six times — and winning once — she retired in 1942 and was rapidly forgotten.

Plagued by the streak of mental illness that ran through her family, she suffered intermittent bouts of depression and avoided facing reality. She became so confused in her later years that she called her second husband (Martin Arrougé) by the name of her first (Irving Thalberg, who died of pneumonia in 1936).

For his part, Douglas showed no signs of the mental illness that gripped the rest of the family. He remarried a year after his first wife's suicide and had two sons.

Despite his many accolades, Douglas Shearer had his detractors. There were those who complained that he had a cavalier attitude to music. "Douglas Shearer hated music," film historian Scott Eyman wrote in his 2005 *Lion of Hollywood* biography of Louis Mayer. "Although Mayer prided himself on having the best departments of any studio, there were those who felt that Shearer was the weak link." Singer Kathryn Grayson declared that "MGM's sound system wasn't that good" because "it stifled high notes," whereas Warners' did not.

Shearer's defence was that music should not overwhelm the story. "You can pour just so much music into a quart bottle and then it spills over," he explained. Considering that MGM was famous for its musicals, it was a rather surprising comment and it sparked an acerbic response from composer David Raskin. "The music at MGM sounded the way it did because the tracks all went through a booth where a little man covered them in peanut butter."

Shearer had an excellent reputation, except for one instance in which his ethics were questioned. It was claimed that he had deliberately tried to ruin the career of screen idol John Gilbert. As the story in Hollywood went, Shearer made Gilbert's voice sound squeaky at the instruction of Mayer, who hated Gilbert. Gilbert's daughter Leatrice said in her 1985 book *Dark Star* that MGM director Clarence Brown had told her that Shearer had told him that "We never turned up the bass when Gilbert spoke. All you heard was treble. Of course, it was a mistake."

Film historian Donald Crafton exonerates Shearer, however. In *American Cinema's Transition to Sound*, published in 1997, Crafton says the allegation against Shearer was a "canard" because Gilbert's voice sounded normal, albeit "affected." Crafton said Gilbert's self-destruction was in fact brought on by drinking.

Douglas Shearer died on January 5, 1971, at the age of seventy-one. During his last weeks in the hospital, his younger sister Norma — with whom he had shared the Academy Award stage in 1929 — did not visit him, nor was she at his bedside when he died. It wasn't due to animosity. She was so beset with depression that she avoided unhappy situations. Thus, she could not bear to see her beloved brother die. Although she lived to be eighty, the aging star suffered from poor mental and physical health in her later years.

Like his sister, Douglas Shearer died with a solid legacy behind him. It was summed up by *Variety*, the show business newspaper, which headed its obituary with: "Understood 'Sound' When Nobody Did."

Susan Goldenberg is the award-winning author of eight non-fiction books and has written for a variety of publications.

Et Cetera

The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931 by Donald Crafton, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.

Thalberg: The Last Tycoon and the World of MGM by Roland Flamini. Crown, New York, 1994.

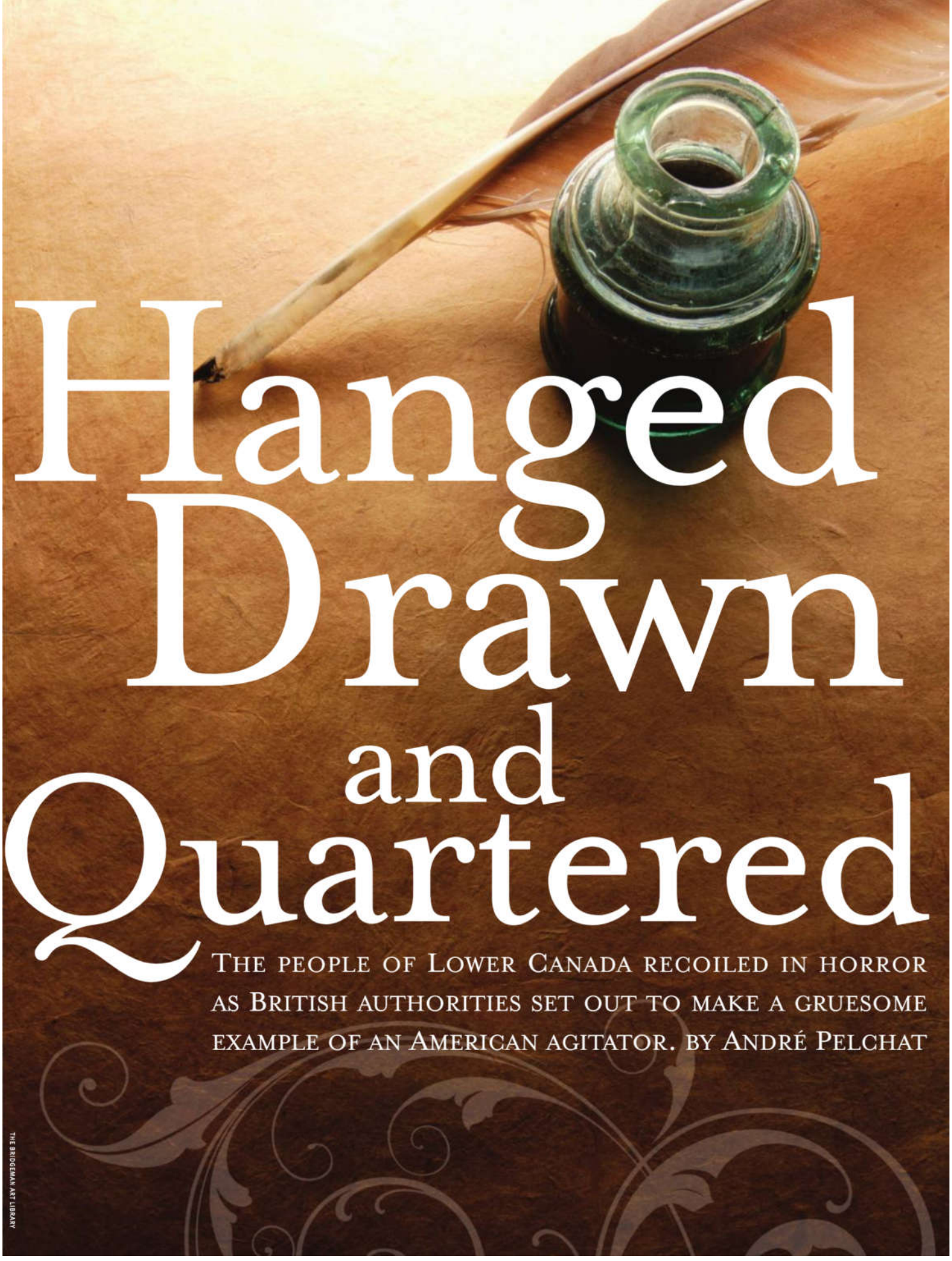
SOLVING SOME OF THE SOUND CHALLENGES OF EARLY HOLLYWOOD.

Mystery taps
On *The Good Earth*, the microphone picked up mysterious tapping sounds that could not be heard on the set. They were traced to a plumber hammering a pipe about half a kilometre away. The pipe happened to touch a girder which carried the sound upwards.

Haunting hounds
When MGM made a dog picture called *The Voice of Bugle Ann*, it wanted a distinctive "voice" for the dog. Just the normal baying sound seemed insufficient, so Shearer mixed in the sound of a French horn to get exactly what he wanted.

Tarzan the Ape Man
The distinctive yell Shearer created for Tarzan baffled generations of children who tried to imitate it, unaware that Shearer embellished the soundtrack electronically, then ran it backward.

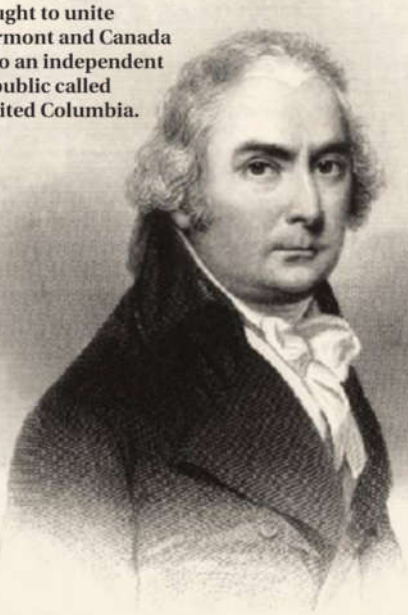
Unidentified man about to be hung on the gallows, English School (20th century).



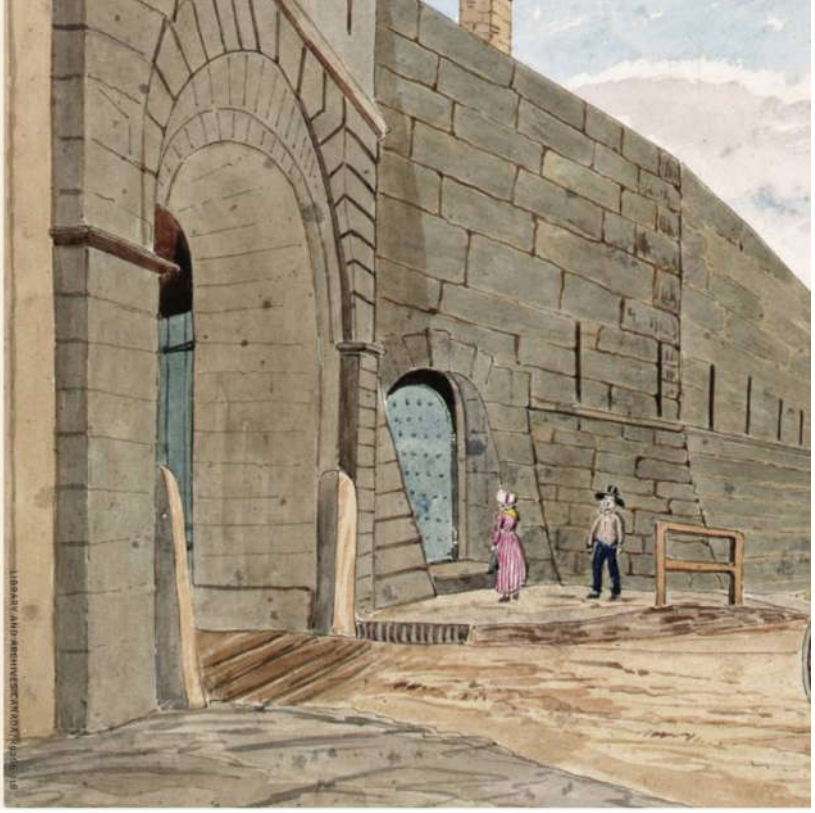
Hanged Drawn and Quartered

THE PEOPLE OF LOWER CANADA RECOILED IN HORROR AS BRITISH AUTHORITIES SET OUT TO MAKE A GRUESOME EXAMPLE OF AN AMERICAN AGITATOR. BY ANDRÉ PELCHAT

THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY



Ira Allen (1751–1814) sought to unite Vermont and Canada into an independent republic called United Columbia.



The outcome of Lower Canada's first trial for high treason was shocking — even by the standards of the eighteenth century. On July 6, 1797, two men stood accused of disloyalty to the British Crown — one a tall and remarkably handsome American from Rhode Island named David McLane, the other a local Quebec citizen named Charles Fréchette.

The trial lasted fourteen hours. The prosecution called fewer than ten witnesses; one of them was Fréchette, who turned against his accomplice, thus probably saving his own life. A jury of twelve prominent, English-speaking citizens found McLane guilty.

All present listened intently as Chief Justice William Osgoode pronounced the sentence on thirty-year-old McLane. Osgoode said he was to be "hanged by the neck, but not until death; for you will be cut open while alive and your bowels will be torn and burned under your eyes; then your head will be split from your body, which will be cut in four parts; and your head as well as your members will be at the King's disposal."

The people were horrified. Such a sentence — the standard "hanged, drawn and quartered" punishment for high treason that Britain had employed for centuries — was unprecedented in Quebec. They thought it very harsh for a man whose only crime may have been talking too much.

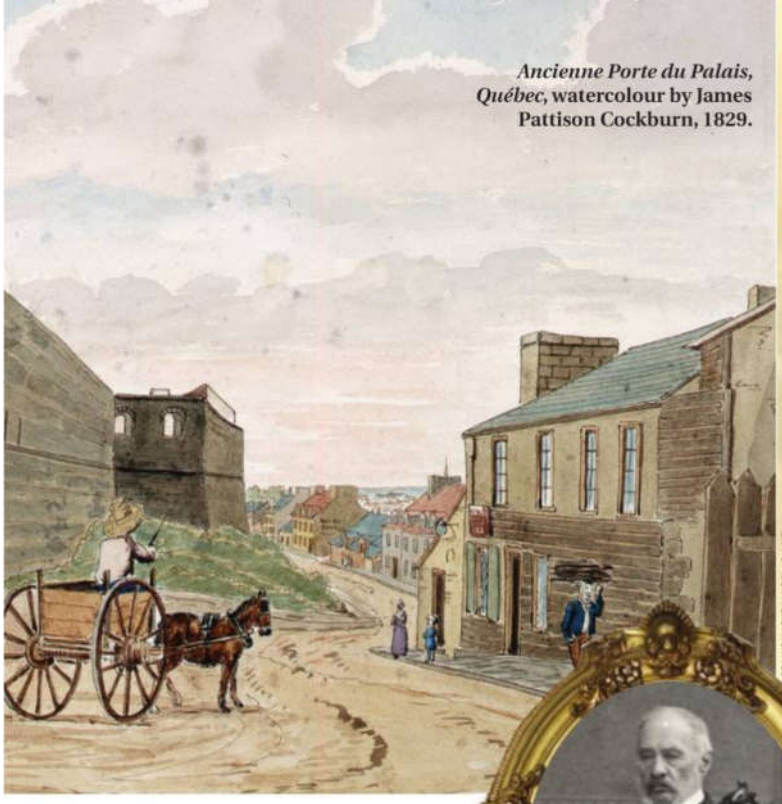
This flag has been adopted by modern Vermont separatists as the official flag of the "Second Vermont Republic."

The events leading to David McLane's trial began the year before, in the summer of 1796, when he was first seen in Lower Canada. People in the Richelieu Valley knew him as Jacob Felt, a Jewish-American horse trader. Everybody seemed to have liked the man who was congenial and so polite as to travel with a French-speaking translator — Charles Fréchette. People could not help notice, though, that he wasn't buying horses.

At the end of the year, an informer brought news about Jacob Felt that worried the colonial authorities. A certain William Barnard declared under oath that he had met Jacob Felt in Vermont and that his real name was David McLane. According to Barnard, McLane told him that he was working to organize a revolt against the British authorities in Lower Canada.

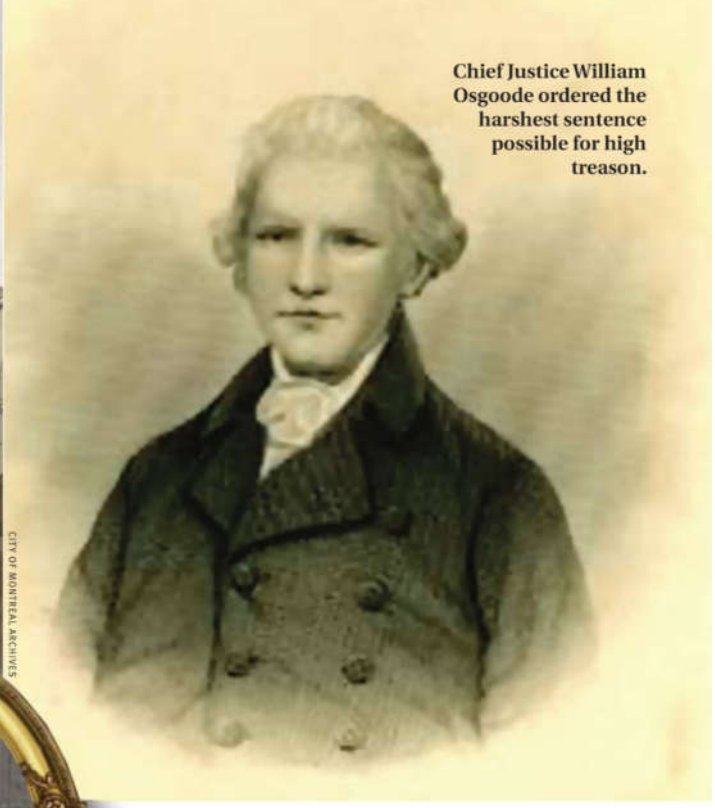
Colonial authorities reacted instantly by offering a 500-pound reward for the Yankee. They were taking no chances. In their minds, these were perilous times for the Crown, for the French Revolution (1789–1793) had changed everything.

The French Revolution found vocal sympathizers among both English-and French-speaking colonials in Canada. The authorities' fears increased in 1796, when the British fleet intercepted a ship, ironically called *The Olive Branch*, coming from France to America. On board was Vermonter Ira Allen, a well-known radical and separatist, with 20,000 muskets and twenty-four pieces of artillery, "ostensibly to equip the Vermont militia but actually to arm Vermonters and French Canadians in an uprising which would result in a state



Ancienne Porte du Palais, Québec, watercolour by James Pattison Cockburn, 1829.

CITY OF MONTREAL ARCHIVES



Chief Justice William Osgoode ordered the harshest sentence possible for high treason.

Novelist Philippe Aubert de Gaspé (left) was ten years old when he witnessed the execution of David McLane. Photo by Stanley G. Triggs, 1865.

called United Columbia," according to historian Charles T. Morrissey in *Vermont: A History*.

Things were not at all quiet in the colony, either. From 1794 to 1797, the habitants were in a constant state of agitation. They were outraged when the government in 1796 adopted a militia bill requiring two thousand men to be mobilized. In many villages, people resisted the recruiters. There were even some riots. People were heard shouting "*Vive les Français*!"

It was in this context that British authorities put a fat price on the head of David McLane.

Whether he knew he was a wanted man or not, McLane was back in the Richelieu Valley in May 1797, still travelling under the name Jacob Felt and still accompanied by his translator, Charles Fréchette. According to Fréchette's testimony, they had reached St-Nicholas, near Quebec City, when McLane started to talk about a plan to start an insurrection in the province. For this, McLane needed to meet a man named John Black, a shipbuilder and Quebec City's representative in the Lower Canada legislative assembly.

What McLane did not know was that Black's sympathies were a pretense. In 1794, Black had been recruited as an agent provocateur by then-Attorney General James Monk. His work had led to the arrest of some protestors.

Was Fréchette aware of that? No one knows. In any case, he arranged a meeting between McLane and Black. The three met in St-Roch, near Quebec City, on May 10, 1797. There, McLane is said to have laid out his rather far-fetched plan: He would have a drink mixed with laudanum (opium syrup) distributed to the troops in Quebec's garrison. This would put them to sleep, so that they could easily be overwhelmed. All he needed were 500 Canadian rebel volunteers, who only needed to be armed with pointed sticks, since the sleeping British soldiers would put up no resistance and no one would be killed. The latter point seemed important to McLane. Then, 15,000 soldiers from Vermont would invade the province. This was the plot, according to the witnesses' testimony.

As soon as the meeting was finished, John Black went to meet John Young, a member of the province's executive council. There, under oath, he provided details of the meeting and gave away McLane's whereabouts. McLane and Fréchette were immediately arrested. The next day, they were formally accused of high treason.

During the brief trial, McLane confessed nothing. There was no other proof against McLane but the story of "the plan" he allegedly told Black and Fréchette.

Looking back, it is hard to see how such a bizarre plot could be taken seriously. Nobody seemed to have checked

The last hanging

The last executions in Canada took place in 1962 at the Don Jail in Toronto. Arthur Lucas was hanged for the murder of an informer and witness, while Ronald Turpin went to the gallows for killing a policeman.

Crime and Punishment

Death by hanging was the usual method of execution in Canada until capital punishment was banned in 1976.

However, there have been some notable exceptions:

Broken on the wheel: In New France in 1690, convicted murderer Jean Haude Hearte of Montreal had his right hand cut off and his body lashed to a wheel, where he received six blows to the arms, legs, and thighs.

Broken alive: In 1752, Jean Baptiste Goyer Belisle, another murderer in Montreal, was tortured, then had his limbs broken and was left to die facing the sky. The sentence was carried out in the marketplace.

Shot with an arquebus: This was done a few times to execute New France colonists who trafficked in liquor. Crimes such as theft, mutiny, and disobedience were more commonly punished by hanging.

Hanged and dissected: Ignace Vailliancourt was given this sentence for murder in 1803. His body was to be delivered to a doctor for dissection.

Hanged, drawn, and quartered: During the War of 1812, in May 1814 at Ancaster, Upper Canada (now Ontario), judges sentenced seventeen traitors to this method of execution. In the end, however, nine were pardoned, eight hanged, and none quartered. David McLane had his sentence carried out in 1797 but he was dead by the time he was drawn and quartered.

if there really was a 15,000-man army massed near the U.S. border, or how McLane intended to obtain the huge quantities of laudanum necessary to put to sleep a whole garrison. That McLane used an alias may give credence to the theory that he was a spy, though he would have been a very poor one. Nevertheless, it was enough for Judge Osgoode to pronounce the exceptional sentence. The judge likely intended to discourage other would-be republicans by making an example of McLane.

The execution took place in public on July 21 at Quebec City's Place des Glacis, today's Place d'Youville. One of the witnesses was ten-year-old Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, who later became one of French Canada's first novelists. In *Les Anciens Canadiens*, a historic novel first published in 1864, he described the scene, saying that the convicted traitor appeared "calm and without arrogance" prior to his execution:

> McLane's sentence, nevertheless, was not executed in its full horror. I saw everything with my own eyes. A big student named Boudreault lifted me from time to time in his arms so that I would miss nothing of that disgusting butchery. Old Dr. Duvert stood near us; he drew out his watch as soon as Ward, the executioner, overturned the ladder on which McLane, a rope around his neck and tied to the upper part of the gallows, was lying on his back; the body, thrown on the side by this brutal movement, hit one of the gallows' post and then stood motionless, only balancing feebly.
>
> "He is dead," said Dr. Duvert, when the executioner cut the rope after twenty-five minutes; "he is dead, he will not feel the cruelties that are going to be done to him now!" Each of us thought that the sentence was to be carried in all its rigour; that the disembowelled victim would see his insides being burned! But no: the poor chap was dead when Ward opened his belly, took out the heart and the bowels, which he burned on a chafing-dish, and then cut his head to show it, bloody as it was, to the people.

Afterwards, four Quebec citizens dug a ditch near the gallows and disposed of his remains there. Thirty years later, McLane's daughter came to Quebec and recovered her father's remains to give him a "more dignified burial," according to Leonard Bouchard in *Morts tragiques et violentes au Canada 17e et 18e siècle, tome II.*

What happened to McLane's "accomplices?"

Charles Fréchette was one year later sentenced to life in prison. He was freed, however, after three years.

John Black went on with his activities as a shipbuilder and was granted, with some associates, huge tracts of land in the Sorel area of southwestern Quebec. But according to a local historian, people treated him like a pariah because of his previous role as a stool pigeon. Bad investments led to his ruin and he went back to England, where his life ended in destitution sometime after 1819.

As for the custom of execution by hanging, drawing, and quartering, there are no further records of it being carried out in full in Canada. England abolished it in 1870.

André Pelchat is a journalist, author, and television producer who lives in Plessisville, Quebec.

There hasn't been much talk of uniting Quebec and Vermont lately. But Vermont still has a separatist movement. For more on this topic, go to TheBeaver.ca.

Et Cetera

Vermont: A History by Charles T. Morrissey. W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1984.

Canadians of Old by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé (a historic novel translated into English by Jane Brierley). Véhicule Press, Montreal, 1996 (first published in French in 1864).

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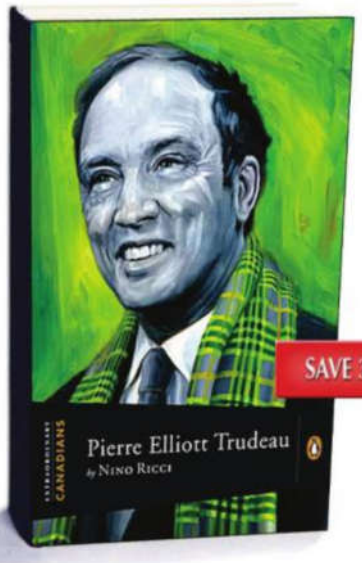

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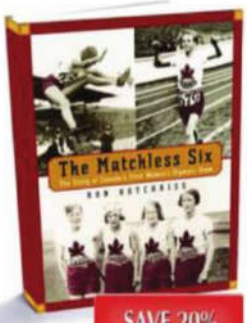

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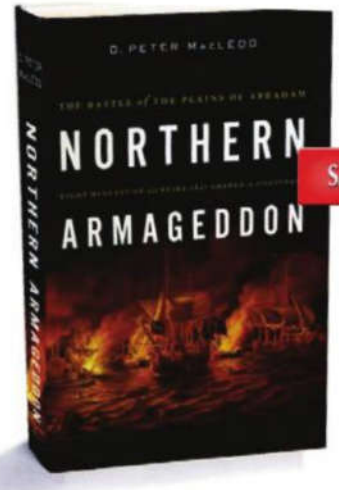

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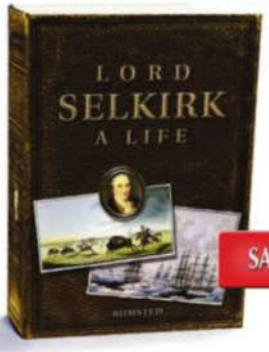

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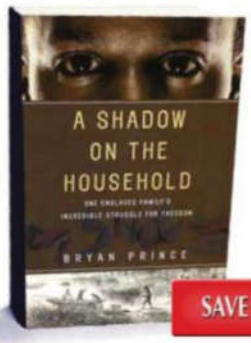

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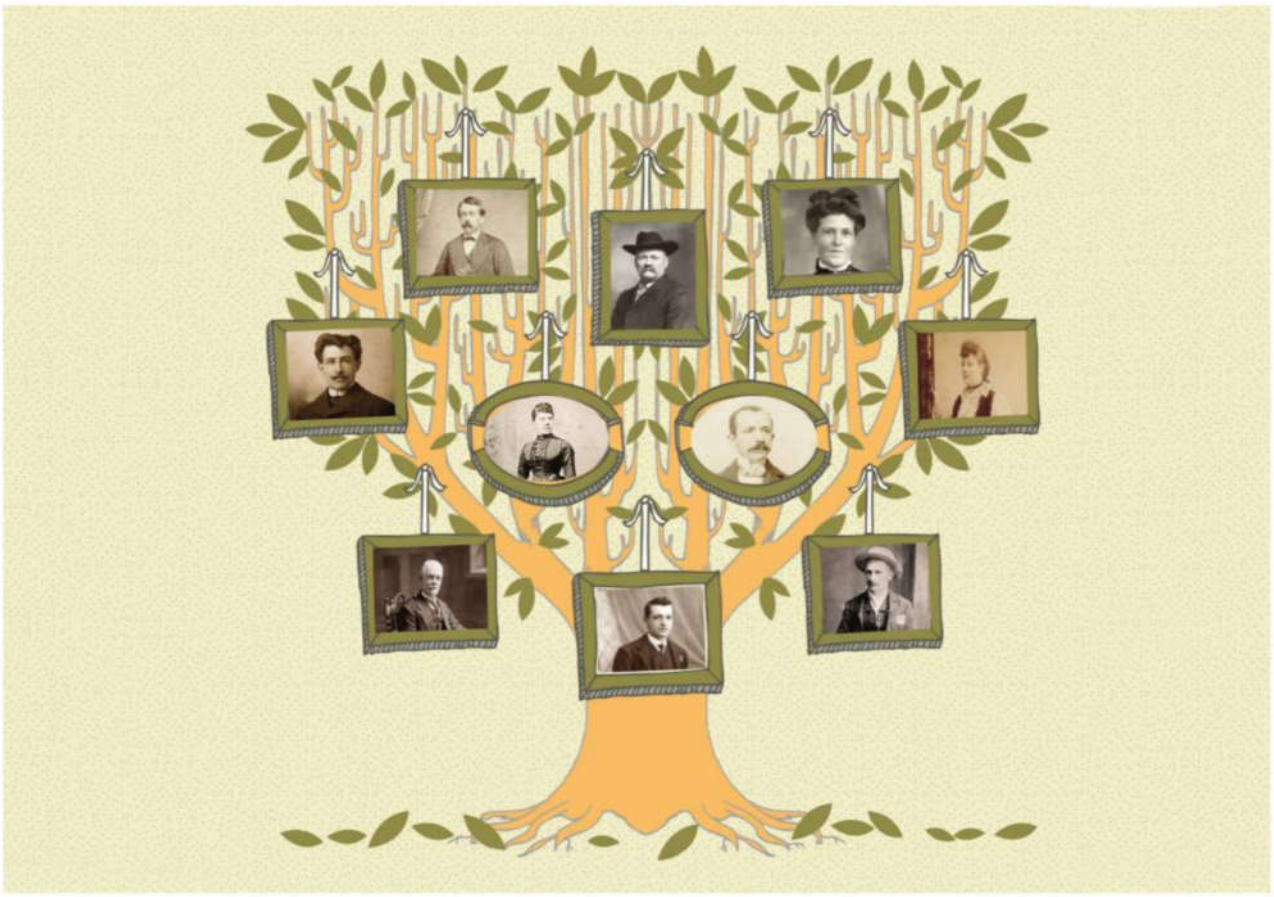
Breathing life into past lives

Don't let your family history fade into a dry listing of dates and names, says Terrence M. Punch.



A genealogist fails when a reader remarks: "They weren't a very interesting bunch, were they?"

Often, the ancestors in question had quite interesting lives, but the author neglected to tell the good bits. In one example, George, the progenitor, served in Wellington's army in the early 1800s during several famous battles in Spain, and received a medal or two. Afterwards, he was granted land in Nova Scotia and was awarded a pension from Royal Hospital Chelsea, the nursing home for British soldiers.

The Colonial Council of Nova Scotia proposed to use military veterans as settlers who would open up a road to run straight across Nova Scotia from Halifax to Annapolis Royal, on the Bay of Fundy. In the years following the wars against Napoleon and the War of 1812, military grants were made in the colonies of British North America.

Not all the grantees remained on their lots, due to the difficulty of clearing land to make decent farms and the tedious chore of constructing roads and bridges in order to bring in supplies and take out produce. Others found the frontier a lonesome and frightening place to live — but not our George. He stayed on, dug in, and made a life for himself.

Decades passed and the veteran's family grew up. Some family members left. A few stayed. A forest fire raged across that area in the mid-1850s, driving out most of the handful of settlers who had persisted for all those years.

Old George, however, was no quitter. He set to work rebuilding his house and sheds, remaining there until his death in 1859 at the age of seventy-five.

As you can see, George's life was anything but boring. The trouble is, the family historian in question had

ISTOCK/MONTAGE: MICHEL GROLEAU

not included any of these fascinating details in the name-and-date skeleton of a genealogy he compiled. There was no breath of life in it.

That is what we must remember when we compile facts about families: to include little anecdotes that can be authenticated. These colourful tales lend charm to family histories, and also illustrate facets of life in bygone times. We are enriched when we find ancestors with stories attached.

This doesn't mean that you should burden your genealogy with inconsequential narrative. However, in our passion to gather names and dates, we must not lose sight of the fact that our ancestors were people who shared our human nature. They had to cope with their world, make choices, and suffer life's ups and downs. It is an ugly thing if we allow our research for roots to degenerate into the humdrum collecting of bones without flesh, bodies without spirit.

What a joy it is to read in a family history a line such as this: "A man of quick temper and some strength, he got into a fight one night, battered his opponents, and found it wisest to hide out on Tancook (Island) from the Halifax constabulary." The line is found in *The Stevens Family of Nova Scotia*. Further reading about that man shows that his outburst did not deter him from being a useful citizen throughout most of his eighty-five years. His twenty children have left many descendants.

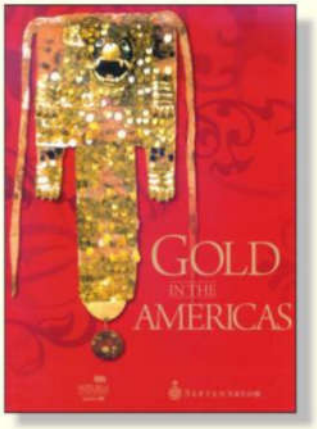
The story need not be adverse to be interesting. Take, for instance, this line — found in the "Raymond Genealogy" published in *The Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly* — which details a certain Jonathan Raymond's sudden "conversion" to prohibition, in which he "went home from the meeting, closed his bar room, and emptied his rum kegs."

Beginning genealogists often wonder which details they should include in their family histories. There's no easy answer — each case will be unique. However, what I wish to emphasize here is that we should reflect carefully before we reduce an ancestor to a name and a few dates.

Who was so wicked that their lives should be obliterated? We make mistakes and we sometimes do wrong. Remember that when doing genealogy. Let those bones live; treat the bad deeds charitably and do not exaggerate the good.

Let's treat our ancestors with respect for their human dignity. Give them the breath of life. They either live in us or desiccate into dust. It is our choice to make.

Dr. Terrence M. Punch is the resident genealogist for CBC Radio on Maritime Noon and the author of ten books, the most recent being *Erin's Sons: Irish Arrivals in Atlantic Canada, 1761–1853, Volume II* (2009).



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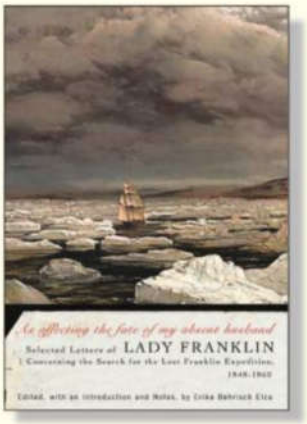

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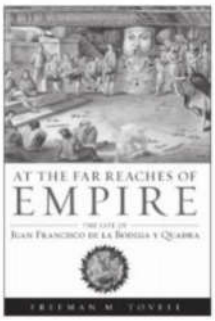

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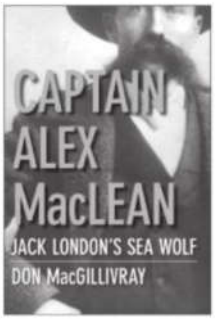

Although MacLean is a colourful character both in his own right and as mythologized by Jack London, this biography reveals more than the construction of a legend.

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- Nathan M. Greenfield, *Times Literary Supplement*

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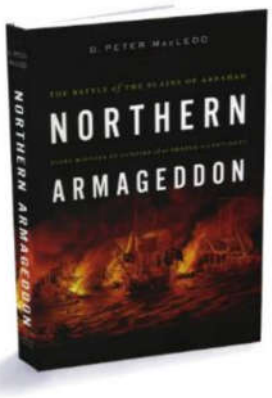


UNFORGETTABLE ENCOUNTER

Northern Armageddon:
The Battle of the Plains of Abraham
by D. Peter Macleod
Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 2008
352 pp., illus., $34.95 hardcover

The cover line on D. Peter Macleod's new book — "Eight minutes of gunfire that shaped a continent" — is misleading, and likely deliberately so.

That's because Macleod — the pre-Confederation historian at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa — knows full well that the siege of Quebec was not an eight-minute affair, but rather the culmination of a months-long campaign of vicious fighting throughout the St. Lawrence River region, from Montreal to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and beyond.

Anyone with even a little sense of Canadian history knows the basic story of the battle for Quebec. On one side, there was Louis-Joseph de Montcalm-Gozon, marquis de Saint-Véran, the supreme commander of French forces in North America, secure in the knowledge that his impregnable Gibraltar of the New World could not be taken. On the other side was the ruthless yet effective British general James Peter Wolfe, the man who had previously taken the French fortress Louisbourg and who would sneak his troops through Quebec's "back door," only to die at the moment of his greatest victory. This great and terrible conflict would claim the lives of both men, and even 250 years later it provokes intense emotions among French and English Canadians.

This is all true — but it's only a small part of the tale. Macleod understands that the real story is more complex and much more human, filled with everyday folk who found themselves in the middle of one of the great game-changing moments in history.

It's these myriad narrative strings — which Macleod so expertly weaves together — that make *Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham* so thoroughly enjoyable.

Take, for instance, the story of the anonymous clerk who worked during the siege at Quebec's Magasin du Roy (Royal Storehouse), trying to ensure that the French troops had all the basic necessities to win the war. Using the clerk's own unsigned journal as a source, Macleod shows us the war through the eyes of a frustrated civil servant; we can all sympathize as the fed-up quartermaster writes of the ineptness of the bureaucracy and leadership, which, he feared, would lose the war for the French.

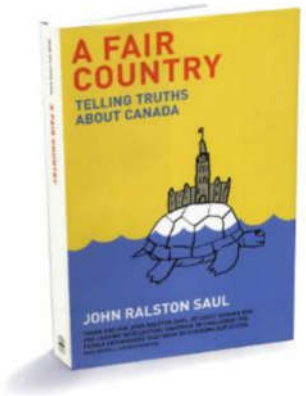
We also learn about William Hunter, a British sailor who felt his career was going nowhere and who hoped to win a promotion by accompanying Wolfe during his assault on Quebec.

Macleod mines countless journals, diaries, and official records for tales that bring the grand battle down to a more human scale. It's these personal vignettes that remind us that wars are not won or lost by generals alone, but by the troops on the ground, the sailors on the seas, and the thousands of anonymous actors who play supporting roles in battle.

As this review was being written, a long-planned re-enactment of the siege of Quebec was cancelled. The re-enactment was to have been timed to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the battle in September 2009.

Those who fought to stop the re-enactment probably wish that the actual conflict could be forgotten as well. It would benefit both sides of the debate to read *Northern Armageddon*, if only to remind them that there is far more to our shared history — and to contentious conflicts such as the siege of Quebec — than simply the end result.

Reviewed by **Mark Reid**, editor of *The Beaver*.



GROUND FOR COMPROMISE

A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada
by John Ralston Saul,
Viking Canada, Toronto, 2008
340 pp., $34 hardcover

In *The Doubter's Companion*, John Ralston Saul defined critics as "delightful people. Perceptive. Fair. Disinterested. Even-handed. Charming." If he reads his reviews — most writers claim not to — I hope he bears that in mind, because it describes this critic to a T. Alas, where *The Doubter's Companion* was funny and wise, *A Fair Country* is tiresome and, at times, simply bizarre. Too bizarre, in fact, to be described as maddening.

Saul commences with a provocative thesis statement: "We are not a civilization of British or French or European inspiration. We never have been." Rather, he writes, "we are a people of Aboriginal inspiration." The European and American influences in our social and political institutions are nothing more than a veneer concealing what is, in fact, "a Métis civilization."

Canadians' commitment to justice, fairness, and inclusion — and Saul believes that these are the foundation of Canadian life — does not stem from a liberal tradition, but from an aboriginal one. Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine, Nellie McClung, Tommy Douglas, and, it would seem, every Canadian who has ever expressed any egalitarian sentiment whatsoever is the product of aboriginal influence, whether they know it or not. Our national failure to recognize and embrace this fact is a consequence of a "colonial mindset" and will lead us to social calamity.

Got that? It is a claim that, if proven, would overthrow not years but decades of historical scholarship, and require every textbook in the country to be rewritten. No problem there: Historians, after all, are part of an elite that is, according to Saul, "deeply dysfunctional," while the history they have written is "infantile" and "artificially tied to Britain, Europe, and the United States." Diplomatic historians

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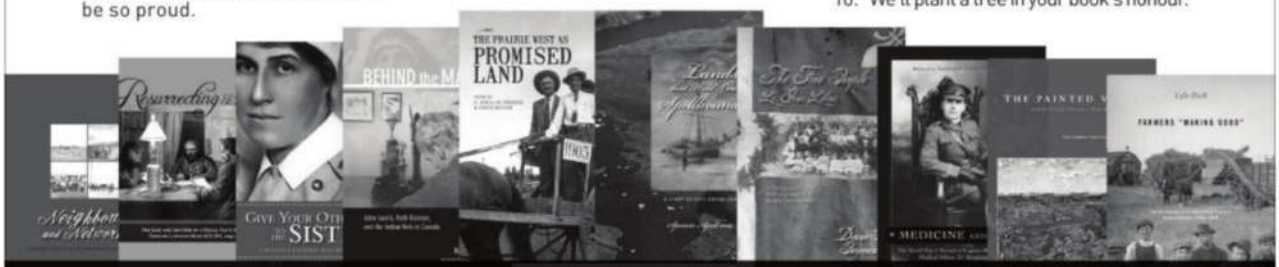

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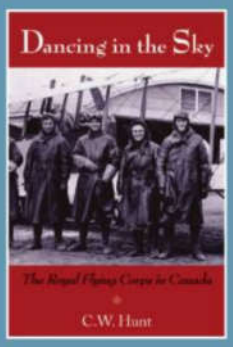

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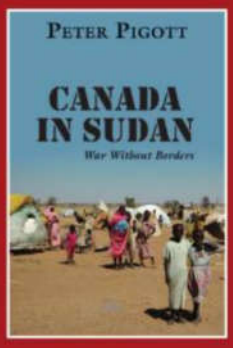

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Reviews

especially have "missed the central point" of our history.

But in support of his own thesis, Saul offers nothing resembling the evidence demanded by the historical profession in support of any truth claim. (The demand for evidence is, no doubt, yet another symptom of a colonial mindset.) Again and again he assumes what has to be proven. There is no substantive original research here; he hangs the whole argument on intuition and a handful of published works.

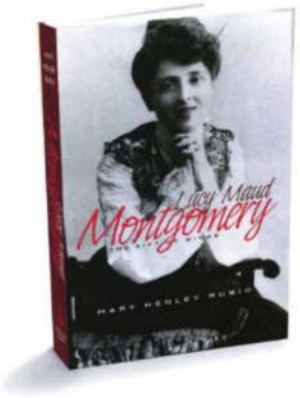
At one point, he even claims that Lester B. Pearson defused the Suez Canal crisis using "classic First Nations negotiation strategy," as if no crisis had ever been peacefully resolved before, and as if there is any evidence that First Nations are better at it than anybody else. This sort of thing goes on and on. Saul writes as if nobody else has ever claimed that there are aboriginal influences in Canadian society, as if nobody else has written about miscegenation, and as if no other societies have worked to achieve justice and fairness.

The belief that we're in a crisis is common to every age, and like most people who write political polemics, Saul would have us believe that we are a civilization poised on a knife's edge. Yet, somehow, we stumble on, the healthiest, wealthiest people in the history of the world.

Do not misunderstand me: I'm not pleading for complacency. Canada has serious problems, too, but solving those problems will require serious solutions. Saul poses none; he admits that he has none, beyond the suggestion that Canadians must recognize the aboriginal roots of their national character. He even has trouble articulating what our problems are — at times his writing descends into a kind of stream-of-consciousness where it's difficult to know what, precisely, he is trying to say.

It pains me to be aligned, even temporarily, with those who gun for anything that Saul writes. I looked forward to this book, but consider it a failure in almost every regard.

Reviewed by **Graham Broad**, who teaches in the history department at King's University College at The University of Western Ontario.



INSPIRED ESCAPES

Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings
by Mary Henley Rubio
Doubleday Canada, Toronto, 2008
752 pp., illus., $35 hardcover

Much has been written lately about the dark side of Lucy Maud Montgomery — of how her sunny, optimistic writing concealed a tortured inner life that became increasingly drug-dependant and eventually ended in what was likely a suicide. That this author who was so existentially heartbroken had created a tale so universally heartwarming — *Anne of Green Gables* — invokes the question: What was Montgomery really like?

Perhaps no one is as qualified to answer this question as Mary Henley Rubio, who has devoted more than two decades of her academic career to the study of Montgomery and her work.

Rubio, along with Elizabeth Hillman Waterston, co-edited Montgomery's huge collection of journals, but was careful not to take them at face value. Montgomery wrote — and rewrote — her journals with an audience in mind, and thus described her life as she wanted others to see it, not necessarily as it was. In *The Gift of Wings* Rubio seeks to fill in the missing pieces. She draws from many sources, including correspondence, legal papers, newspaper clippings, family genealogies, and interviews with Montgomery's descendents.

The result is a multi-faceted history that, while it revolves around one person's life, is really a story of human nature in all of its complexity. Along the way, the reader learns a lot about the social history of Canada during Montgomery's lifetime (1874–1942). It's a riveting narrative that's hard to put down.

Rubio argues that Montgomery was much like her creation, Anne, in that she lived her life between the soaring of imagination and the depths of despair. As Montgomery wrote in her journals, the ability to "escape at will into a beautiful world of your own will help you amazingly through the hard places of life."

Montgomery was profoundly troubled by her family situation. Her husband, a minister, suffered from deep depression. But it was one of her sons, Chester, a shady lawyer, brilliant manipulator, and probable psychopath, who truly proved to be her undoing. Rubio shows how Montgomery's moods rose and fell in line with the trajectory of Chester's life — a life that included philandering, various forms of cheating, and suspected pedophilia.

Her fragile mental state resulted in a dependence on prescription sedatives. She more than once stated a wish to end her life, and she died of an apparent overdose in 1942.

Yet her shadow side was not so evident to those around her. Even her maids saw her as bright, witty, organized, and kind. She was active in writing circles, gave frequent public talks, and encouraged young writers — reminding them that the phenomenally successful *Anne of Green Gables* had been rejected five times before being published.

The Canadian literary establishment has tended to dismiss Montgomery's work as sentimental children's fare. But Rubio, who is American-born, puts *Anne of Green Gables* in the same league as Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

"Her books appeared to be 'simple little tales' … but that was misleading: The last quarter-century of scholarly research has shown that her writing has been, in fact, a very powerful agent of social change," Rubio writes.

Rubio argues that Montgomery's books inspired women to greater heights of achievement while bringing consolation to heads of state and spurring soldiers in the trenches to fight for home. Even today, the worldwide appeal of her homely stories shows no sign of fading.

Reviewed by **Nelle Oosterom**, associate editor of *The Beaver*.

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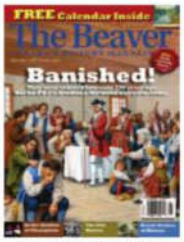

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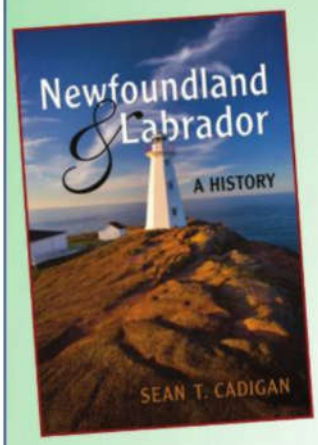

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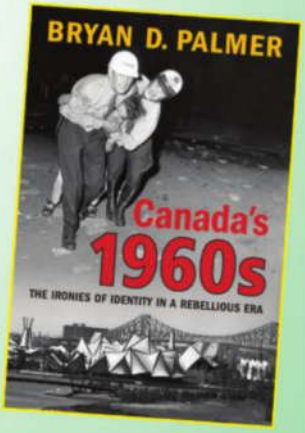
by Bryan D. Palmer



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MORE BOOKS

Frances Anne Hopkins: Images from Canada
by Thomas Schultze
Penumbra Press, Manotick, Ontario, 2008
120 pp., illus., $55 hardcover

This slim volume of drawings and paintings provides a delightful glimpse into artist Frances Anne Hopkins' life as well as the time and place in which she lived. Little is known about her early years, but we are told that she was only twenty when she married thirty-eight-year-old Edward Martin Hopkins in London, England, in 1858.

Her husband was a senior official with the Hudson's Bay Company. She moved with him and three young stepchildren to start a new life in Canada, and by the age of twenty-five they had three more children. Left to cope on her own for long periods, Hopkins spent much of her time documenting her surroundings.

As her family grew older, Hopkins and her husband were able to take long canoe trips aided by guides and other employees. Her surviving work consists of delicate line drawings — including both rough sketches and detailed, polished works — along with pale, pristine watercolours and dark, moody oil paintings. Together, they record a passing age.

The book is not meant to be a definitive biography. Rather, it lets Hopkins' pictures speak for themselves. **— B.T.**

This Island in Time: Remarkable Tales from Montreal's Past
by John Kalbfleisch
Vehicule Press, Montreal, 2008
188 pp., illus., $17.95 paperback

Ranging from the arrival of the first settlers to the dark days of the Cold War, *This Island in Time: Remarkable Tales from Montreal's Past* takes a fun look at one of Canada's most fascinating cities.

Beaver readers will find themselves right at home with John Kalbfleisch's unique chronicles of Montreal and its con-

nection to international rulers, national triumphs and tragedies, and the lives of everyday Canadians.

From the stories of Paul de Chomeday and Jeanne Mance to the exploits of John Wilkes Booth, a not-so-clandestine band of German spies, and tales with royal connections, the city of Montreal is the backdrop for events felt around the world.

Best known for his weekly historical column "Second Draft" in the *Montreal Gazette*, Kalbfleisch brings a wonderful collection of stories and personalities to life. They will engage Canadians from coast to coast. **—Joel Ralph**

Who Killed Jackie Bates?: Murder and Mercy During the Great Depression
by Bill Waiser
Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, 2008
208 pp., illus., $24.95 hardcover

Who Killed Jackie Bates? is a sad, somewhat gruesome tale of a young family from Glidden, Saskatchewan. It tells of the true-life story of Ted and Rose Bates, who, along with their eight-year-old son Jackie, were found on December 5, 1933, gassed and bloodied with knife wounds. The family was in their rented car, parked in a schoolyard in Avalon, Saskatchewan.

That the despair and frustration of tough Depression times led to such an extreme act makes for a poignant read on its own. The fact that young Jackie Bates died, while his parents survived and were subsequently tried for his murder, allows for an even deeper glimpse into the human condition.

Author Bill Waiser thoroughly researched the incident through police and trial records, as well as by interviewing people who knew the family. *Who Killed Jackie Bates?* may not be everybody's cup of tea, but if you can get past the blood and gore you will find a tragic tale that is hard to put down. **—B.T.**

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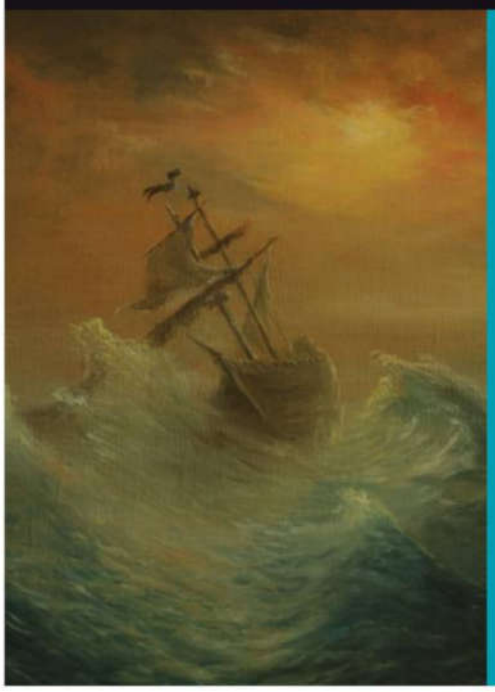

Shipwrecks!
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Giving local history its due

History advocates keep Canada's story alive on the grassroots level.

Okay, I was hooked the moment the book came in the mail: *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island* by Robert J. Morgan.

I started my historical career working with Bob Morgan in Cape Breton. Though I soon left, he stayed. I could see in this very readable history — the island's first in 150 years — a culmination of the near half-century Morgan has spent deep inside the local history and culture of his island. And something more, too.

Beneath the refrain that Canadians don't know or care about our shared history lies a remarkable wealth of deeply rooted, deeply local historical interest. Morgan's lifework, which helped fuel a cultural renaissance in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, is a shining example of how grassroots history and local cultures sustain each other in communities right across Canada, generally without the rest of the country taking any notice.

Morgan first went to Cape Breton Island in 1962 to teach history at the local college, now Cape Breton University. There was a strong local culture, but no local history courses, no local history societies, and not a single local museum or heritage property on the island.

"I noticed little St. Pat's Church sitting abandoned on the esplanade," he told me recently, "and it looked old. I said, 'What's that?'" Derelict and awaiting demolition, it was the island's oldest Catholic church, built in 1828. When Morgan and some friends decided to make it a local museum, there were no grants and the word "heritage" had barely been coined. But they formed the Old Sydney Society in 1966, Morgan recruited some of his summer students as unpaid labour, and the museum has been there ever since.

The society rallied support from local notables and successful expatriates. The supportive local MLA became a cabinet minister. The movement snowballed. "I think we have forty historical societies on the island now, and twenty-five museums," Morgan says.

CHRISTOPHER MOORE

Robert J. Morgan, the author of *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island.*

In Sydney alone, the Old Sydney Society helped preserve several buildings. One, the Lyceum, hosted *The Rise and Follies of Cape Breton Island*, the 1977 cabaret/musical that helped drive the evolution from traditional Celtic fiddling and step-dancing to international successes like the Rankins, Ashley McIsaac, and Rita McNeil. "The Rise and Follies" also inspired "We Rise Again," Leon Dubinsky's much-performed hymn that has become Cape Breton's unofficial anthem — and the source of Morgan's title.

Today, with forty or more cruise ships visiting Sydney every summer, history and culture underpin the city's tourist industry, and many of the visitors are hosted by summer staff employed by the historical society. As if to confirm the new standing of local history, the city last year declared the area around St. Patrick's Church a historic district.

Morgan, who worked steadily on the island in teaching, historic sites work, and archives, is now retired, but as his publisher testifies, he's still active.

"Bob is extremely generous with his time," says Ron Caplan of Breton Books. "He'll speak anywhere. Anything about the island, they give Bob a call. If they

want some advice down in Richmond County, say — he'll be there."

For grassroots history across Canada, a Ron Caplan is often as vital as a Bob Morgan: someone to print and distribute the community's stories. Caplan came to the island in the early 1970s, a poet steeped in a tradition he calls writing from where you stand. "I was trying to read myself into Cape Breton," he says, and that project led first to *Cape Breton's Magazine* and then to Breton Books, which reprinted the out-of-print local histories Caplan wanted to read. As he says, "When you have a press, word gets around." Soon he was also publishing local poetry and fiction. *The Glace Bay Miners' Museum*, a story by local writer Sheldon Currie, became an internationally successful book, play, and movie: another dimension to the historically rooted cultural flowering.

That transformational power of local history does not just happen in Cape Breton. A few years ago Mike Fedyk, of Mossbank, Saskatchewan (pop. 400), launched the Rural History and Culture Association "to confront the idea that nothing ever happened in rural Saskatchewan. When you tell people their history matters, you tell them they matter!"

The RHCA's forte is re-enacting history: a 1957 debate in Mossbank between Premier Tommy Douglas and future premier Ross Thatcher; Premier Jimmy Gardiner's 1928 debate with the Ku Klux Klan in Lemberg; a John Diefenbaker campaign evening. Each was recreated by actors and a participatory audience — right in the town and building where the original event took place.

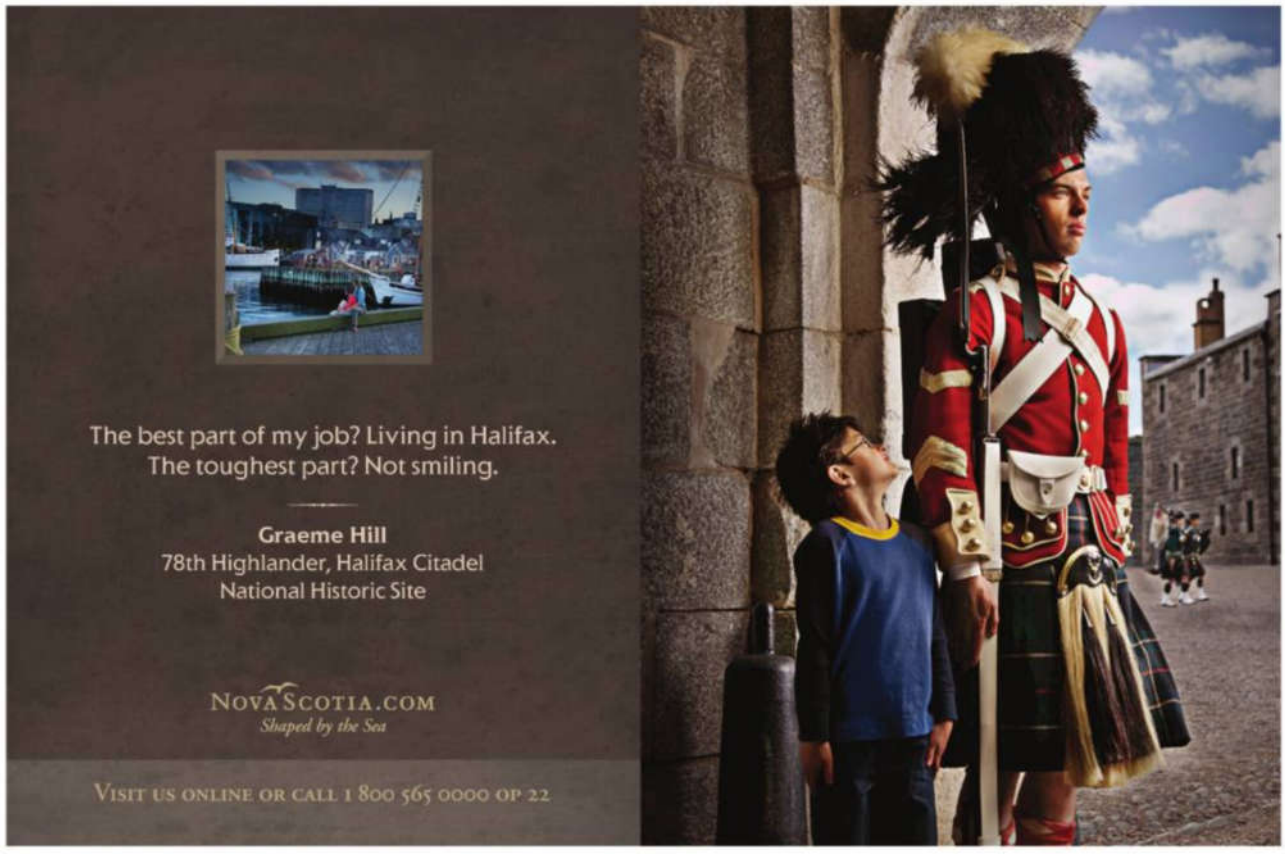
"It is all in the presentation," says Fedyk. "Once people knew, they came. Lots of people from the cities were willing to come out to Mossbank. If you let people know, they will show up."

Fedyk has been moved by the deep hunger he finds for that kind of local affirmation. "We do popular history people can identify with. We like getting people in the door!"

It's not only small places that show a powerful interest in their own stories. On the blog *HistoryWire*, the Vancouver historian Daniel Francis recently saluted terrific British Columbia histories that get dismissed as "local" by national media. "When we brought out *The Encyclopedia of British Columbia* in 2000, we hoped we could sell ten thousand copies. Without any national attention, we sold thirty thousand. People here felt this was their book about their province. The hunger for books like that, books that address the profound sense of place … it's tremendous."

Bob Morgan and Ron Caplan know that. When they launched *Rise Again*, an overflow crowd lined for hours to get copies signed. The second volume of Morgan's history will be appearing soon. "And everyone who bought the first will want the second," Morgan says.

Christopher Moore comments in every issue of The Beaver.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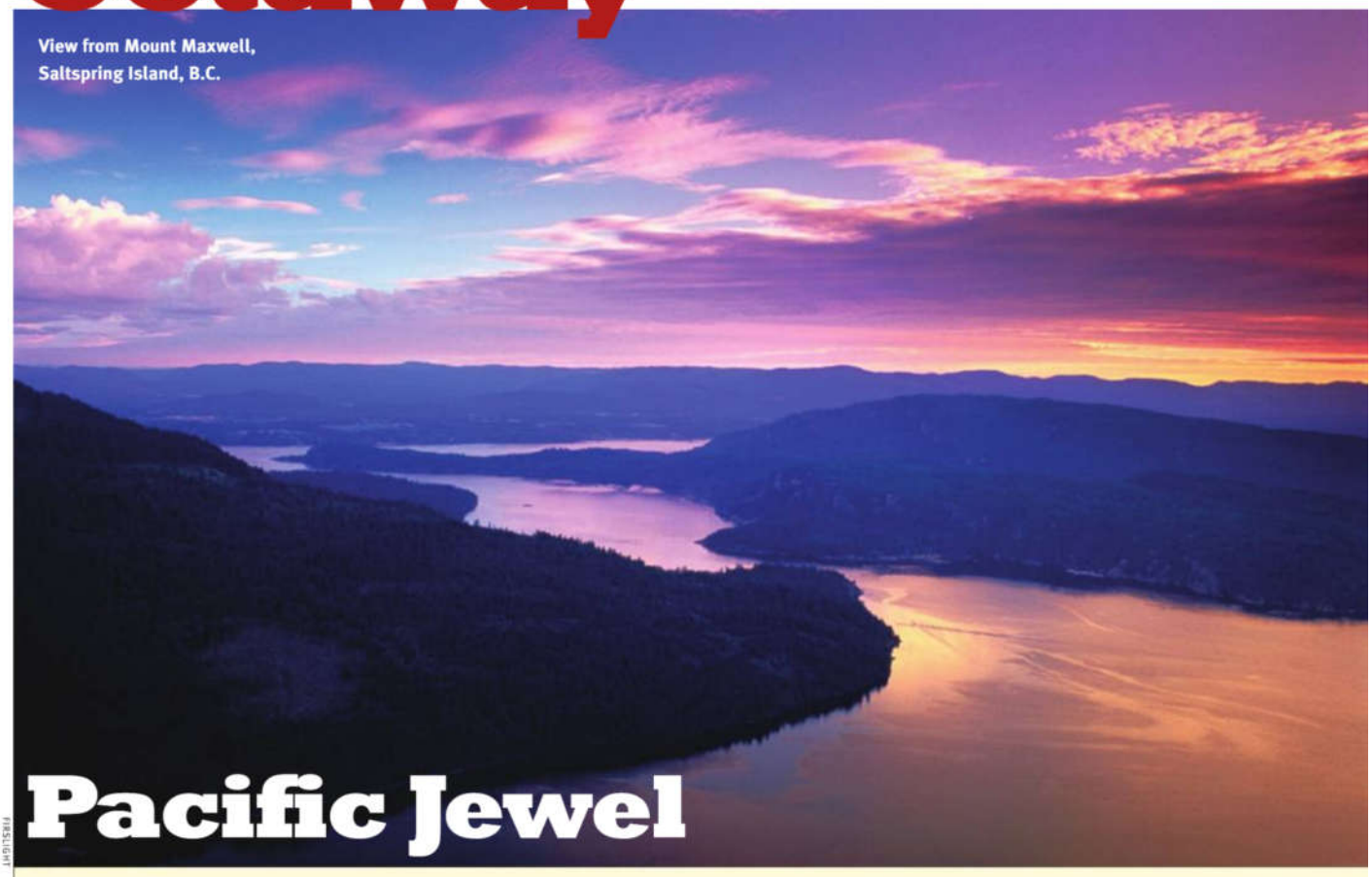


View from Mount Maxwell, Saltspring Island, B.C.

FIRSTLIGHT

Pacific Jewel

JoAnn Roe discovers the multi-ethnic history of Saltspring Island.

When wintry winds blow or summer temperatures soar, Canadians often seek the moderate climate of Victoria on Vancouver Island. Once there, a short ferry ride takes visitors to Saltspring Island, a hidden gem on the Pacific that's rich in history.

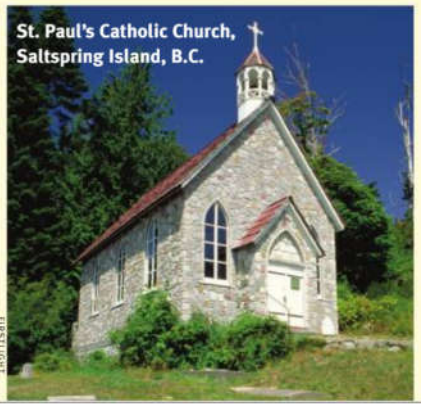
Saltspring (or Salt Spring) is a haven for retirees, artists, fishermen, and orchardists. But things were different 150 years ago. Back then, only a few people — a small group of Tsawout people — actually lived on the island (they lived at what is now Fulford Harbour until 1920). Otherwise, the First Nations of the region only visited Saltspring to camp, crab, fish, and hunt. Their shell middens can still be seen along the island's gentler shores.

In 1855, a Hudson's Bay Company ship landed on the island's north shore. Company officers first named it Saltspring after the cold saltwater springs — which the native people called *Klaathem* — found there. The HBC established a crude building on Ganges Harbour (now the Hastings House Spa). The post was often unmanned and operated on the honour system.

The island was a quiet place with lovely arbutus-lined bays and mountains covered with towering Douglas fir forests. But then came the discovery of gold on the Fraser River in B.C.'s interior — an event which in a roundabout way led to Saltspring's settlement by non-native people.

Scores of prospectors, many of them Americans, flooded into British territory. James Douglas, head of the HBC post in Victoria and governor of the newly proclaimed British Columbia colony in 1858, feared being outnumbered and taken over by the United States. He needed colonists, not prospectors, to stabilize the new colony. So he invited a group of free, prosperous, and educated black farmers from California (who were uneasy about growing discrimination there) to colonize Vancouver Island.

Of this group, two or three dozen settlers came to Saltspring Island, landing at Vesuvius Bay. Among the family names were Whims, Parry, Lineker, Booth, Mal-



St. Paul's Catholic Church, Saltspring Island, B.C.

FIRSTLIGHT

Ganges, Saltspring Island, B.C.

FIRSTLIGHT

landaine, Despard, Tate, Brinn, and Hogg. Soon, people of other cultures, including many out-of-luck prospectors — Europeans, Americans, former HBC employees, Hawaiians, and Japanese — joined them. They all lived in relative harmony.

The settlers built cabins, established a school, held elections for local officials, and opened commercial businesses. The first settlers had been farmers in California and, noting that the climate was favourable for orchards, they planted apple trees as their mainstay crop.

While competition from mainland orchards eventually eclipsed the island's apple industry, the legacy of those early orchardists lives on today in Saltspring's annual Apple Festival. The island's remaining growers have banded together to preserve the diverse apple varieties by keeping old trees as "heritage" apples. To qualify, a variety must have been planted or found growing wild before 1900. At the 2008 festival — the tenth annual — at least 200 varieties were exhibited. Among them was the snow apple, or Fameuse, considered Canada's oldest.

During last September's festival, visitors and locals enjoyed lectures, displays of paintings and crafts, edible apple creations, and tours of fifteen local orchards, at least one of which features a few 150-year-old trees.

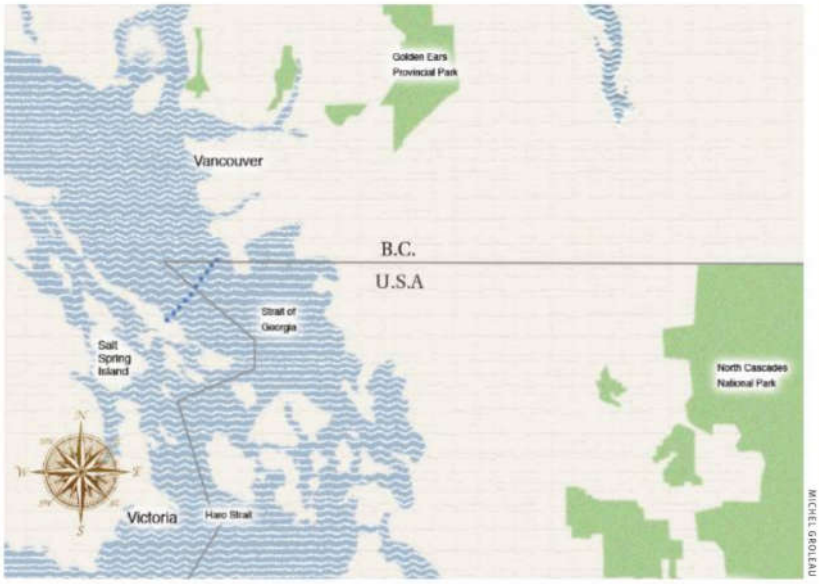
Meanwhile, at Ruckle Provincial Park, a flock of friendly turkeys greets visitors. Henry and Ella Anna Ruckle first settled this 486-hectare farm in the 1870s. Descendants Gordon and Lotus Ruckle sold the farm to the B.C. government in 1972. It was designated a provincial park in 1975, to be farmed traditionally. The Ruckles still live there, however, as does another Ruckle descendant.

Down the road, the charming town of Ganges boasts several art galleries that include works by Robert Bateman, one of Canada's most famous wildlife artists and a Saltspring resident. Another place of interest is the Akerman Museum, established by Bob Akerman, a descendant of an early settler. The museum includes a large collection of artifacts from the area's native and pioneer history.

Saltspring has forty-two heritage sites — including St. Mary's Anglican Church built in 1894 and St. Paul's Catholic Church built in 1885. There are also eight heritage roads and twenty-six parks to explore on Saltspring, one of Western Canada's oldest settlements.

JoAnn Roe has written hundreds of articles for Canadian and American magazines and is the author of fifteen books. She is a member of the Society of American Travel Writers.

IF YOU GO...



MICHEL GROLEAU

Salt Spring Island Visitor Centre
Located in the heart of downtown Ganges, fourteen kilometres from Fulford Ferry, seven kilometres from Vesuvius Ferry and six kilometres from Long Harbour Ferry. It can be found by following the signage. Shops, galleries, restaurants and more are a short stroll away.
T: (866) 216-2936
E: chamber@ssisland.com
W: saltspringtourism.com

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T: (250) 539-2115
E: k2parks@shaw.ca
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News from Canada's National History Society

History Matters

Canada's National History Society
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Founded in 1994 to popularize Canadian history, the work of Canada's National History Society includes: **The Beaver, Kayak,** the **Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History** to honour the country's best history teachers, and the **Pierre Berton Award** to recognize those who have brought history to a wider audience.

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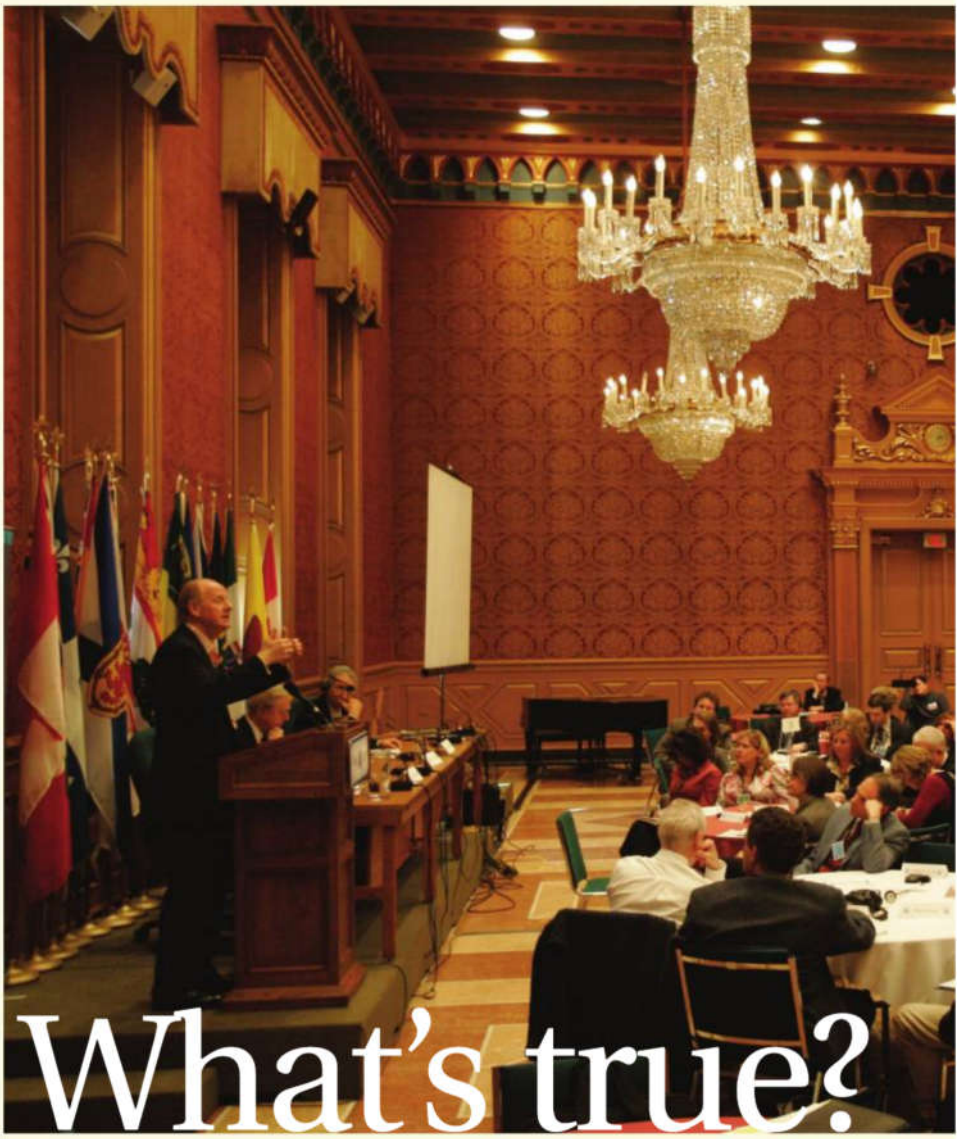
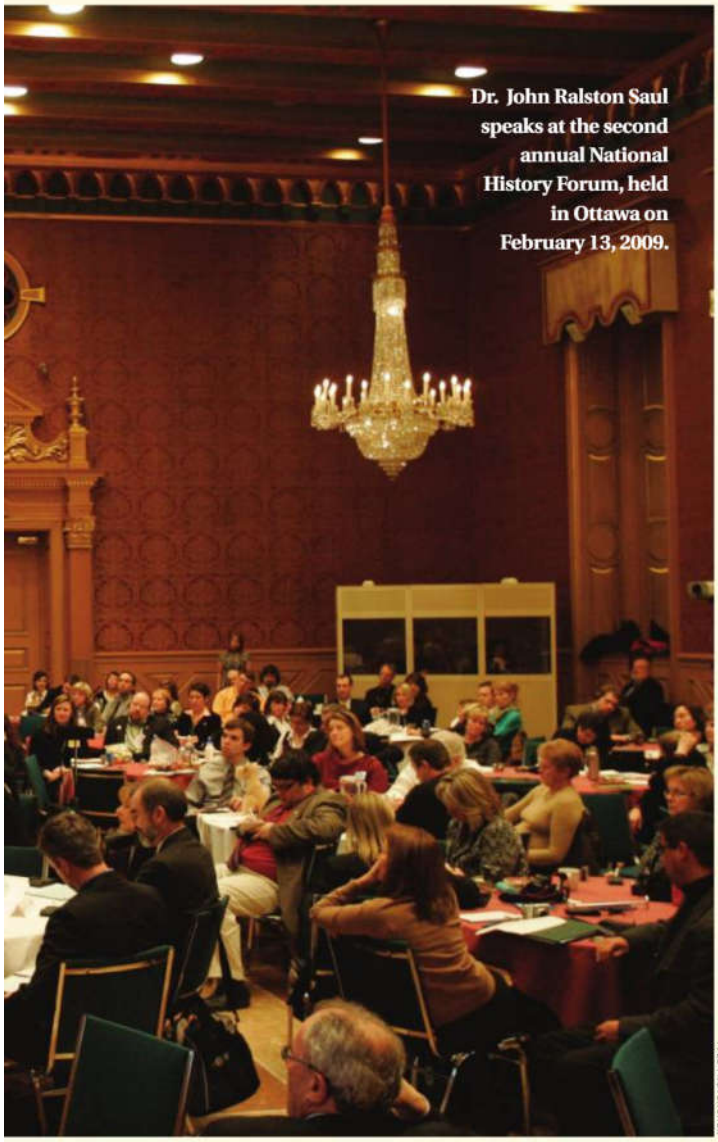


What's true?

History Forum debates the truth of the past. by Joel Ralph

Where did you learn about history? From your history teacher? What about from the local museum, your grandfather, or a story in your local newspaper? Maybe even from *The Beaver* magazine? Can any of these sources be trusted?

These were the topics debated during Canada's National History Society's second annual National History Forum held on February 13, 2009. The forum, sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group, and held on Parliament Hill in conjunction with the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy, was a chance for leading history thinkers Dr. John Ralston Saul and Dr. Peter Seixas to discuss the notion



Dr. John Ralston Saul speaks at the second annual National History Forum, held in Ottawa on February 13, 2009.

YVES PROVENCHER

of historical trust, the concept of truth in history, and a host of other history-related issues, with more than one hundred educators from across Canada.

The debate was wide-ranging, and provoked discussion about the relationships between historical trust, education, and public knowledge.

"We've had Dominion Institute surveys measuring what facts people do and don't know about the past," noted Dr. Seixas, "but what is our next step in terms of measurement of public historical literacy?"

Dr. Seixas is part of a team of academic researchers studying how Canadians learn about their past and how they use it in their day-to-day lives. The "Canadians and Their Past" project looks at what people — young and old — actually understand about the history they have learned. He notes that while many people are often using complex skills to analyze the past, more work still needs to be done. This has important repercussions on how the history curriculum in schools should be changed.

"Up to this point we have not, other than some work with primary sources, articulated them clearly for students so that they can start to unpack the dilemmas of continuity and change, of cause and consequence, of the ethical dimension of history," Dr. Seixas said. "It's not just remembering everything that's in the textbook; they have to master these problems in order to be

Who is this man? A national survey in early 2009 revealed 42 per cent of Canadians couldn't name Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald.

Structuring History

Researchers have identified "structural" historical concepts that provide the basis of historical thinking. The Benchmarks project is using this approach, with six distinct but closely interrelated historical thinking concepts. Students should be able to:

1 Establish *historical significance* (why we care, today, about certain events, trends and issues in history. Why are the Plains of Abraham significant for Canadian history?)

2 Use primary source *evidence* (how to find, select, contextualize, and interpret sources for a historical argument. What can a newspaper article from Berlin, Ontario in 1916 tell us about attitudes towards German-Canadians in wartime?)

3 Identify *continuity and change* (what has changed and what has remained the same over time. What has changed and what has remained the same about the lives of teenaged girls, between the 1950s and today?)

4 Analyze *cause and consequence* (how and why certain conditions and actions led to others. What were the causes of the Northwest Rebellion?)

5 Take *historical perspectives* (understanding the "past as a foreign country," with its different social, cultural, intellectual, and even emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions. How could John A. Macdonald compare "Chinamen" to "threshing machines" in 1886?)

6 Understand the *moral dimension* of historical interpretations (this cuts across many of the others: how we, in the present, judge actors in different circumstances in the past; how different interpretations of the past reflect different moral stances today; when and how crimes of the past bear consequences today. What is to be done today, about the legacy of aboriginal residential schools?)

Taken together, these tie "historical thinking" to competencies in "historical literacy."

Excerpted from: *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: Framework for Assessment in Canada*, by Peter Seixas, Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. For more information visit: www.histori.ca/benchmarks

able to be historically competent."

John Ralston Saul, one of Canada's best-known authors, agreed with Dr. Seixas.

"We really have to get away from the idea that we have a couple of facts and this is the basis of our history. This is a real problem," he says. "In a way, what I've been saying is: Most of the key facts presented to explain the direction of Canadian history are facts that were stuck in place late in the nineteenth century and are not facts at all. They're not facts."

Queen Victoria

Dr. Saul has recently completed a new book, *A Fair Country*, where he challenges the traditional view of Canada's foundations. He describes the traditional history of Canada as largely the result of political positioning during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This version continues to be taken for granted today, he says, event though it's not based on the actual facts of how things came to be.

Citing the selection of Ottawa as our national capital, Dr. Saul explained how Canadians have largely been disconnected from the original intentions of the Fathers of Confederation.

"For example, we teach almost every kid in this country that Queen Victoria chose Ottawa as the capital, right? It's not true," said Dr. Saul. He added that

Dr. Peter Seixas, at left, speaks at the National History Forum. He is studying what Canadians know about their history and how they use that knowledge in their daily lives.

Below, Dr. John Ralston Saul.

YVES PROVENCHER

"We really have to get away from the idea that we have a couple of basic facts and this is the basis of our history."

the actual process of choosing the capital was a much more complicated and politically charged affair. There was a series of backroom conversations between the government of the day and the Queen's representatives, a "phoney" competition held between five cities that was basically rigged to have Ottawa win the bid, and ultimately, multiple votes in the House of Commons before Ottawa was officially named the capital of Canada.

In essence, the politicians of the day knew naming Ottawa the capital would ruffle some feathers, so they tried to make it seem like the Queen had made the final decision.

"And in spite of this ... prime ministers give speeches, mayors give speeches, (and) history teachers are obliged to teach that the Queen chose Ottawa," Dr. Saul says. "And by doing that, we represent ourselves as a minor colonial nothing, when in fact it was a very tough decision that had to be made and was made here."

Dr. Saul said we then are forced to live with the consequences of historical misinformation.

"What is the direct result of that today?" asked Dr. Saul. "The direct result is a continuing discourse across the country that Ottawa is not a proper capital for Canada, that Ottawa is not the natural capital, that Ottawa is a bad place. All of that is born out of the false myth that it was artificially chosen by an aging overweight lady who had never been here. That's what makes that myth possible. Once you understand that it was actually chosen by Canadians, for Canadians, that changes the myth of the place completely."

History Society CEO Deborah Morrison noted that while Dr. Saul's and Dr. Seixas's presentations likely wouldn't have been made even a decade ago, and may still be considered contentious by some people, she is encouraged that Canadians are increasingly willing to engage in a deeper examination of their history.

"I agree with you, that there is something happening now that is very exciting," Dr. Seixas added. "We now have a substantial body of history education research which did not exist in 1990 in North America . . . and it's as though at this point that the discussion — (one) that was cantankerous and acrimonious in the beginning — has reached a kind of maturity where a lot of the different people in institutions … are now ready to work with each other."

Dr. Saul agreed that a public willingness to explore our past is snowballing. "It all starts to move and people are suddenly ready for something that was always there."

Special thanks to Geoff Ives for his help in assembling this story.

For more on the History Forum, including podcast interviews with Dr. Seixas and Dr. Saul, go to: TheBeaver.ca.

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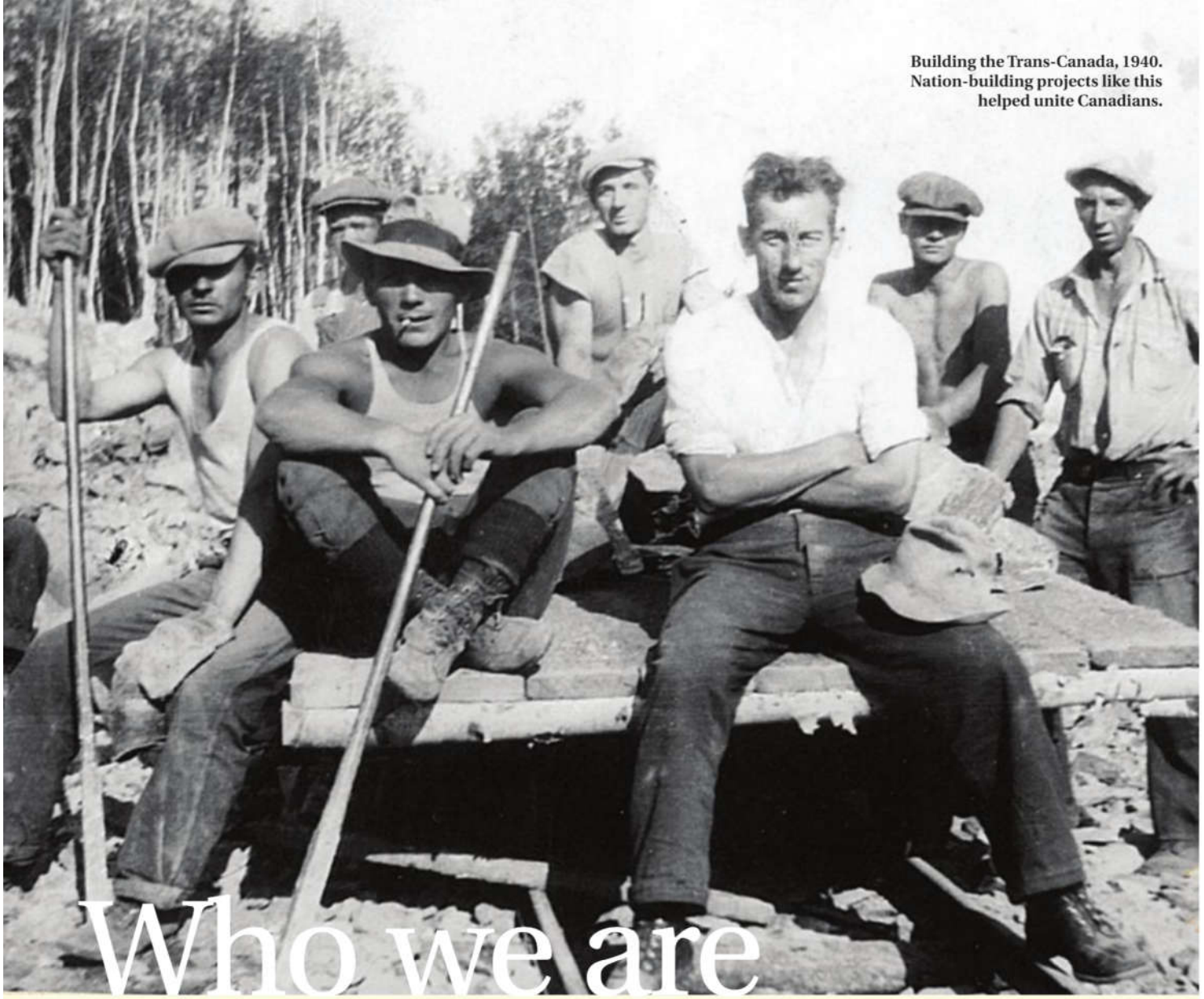

Building the Trans-Canada, 1940. Nation-building projects like this helped unite Canadians.

Who we are

Canadians neglect the past at their peril, says Dominion Institute co-founder. by Phil Koch

It might be clichéd to say that our history makes us who we are, but in a country like Canada, where we often feel uneasy discussing past conflicts, it can sometimes seem simpler to avoid the past. Rudyard Griffiths, author of the new book *Who We Are: A Citizen's Manifesto*, is firmly in the camp of those who believe we do so at our own peril.

Griffiths is a co-founder of the Dominion Institute, a national non-profit organization that promotes history and civic literacy. One of the institute's main functions has been to gather statistics that help us determine who we actually are as a nation. Griffiths says his work there demonstrated that Canadians place a high value on our history and shared institutions. Yet, despite this interest in the past and our belief in its importance, he says we show a "neglect of history in a lot of our popular culture, in our schools, and finally in our day-to-day lives."

Griffiths traces our current "ahistorical" tendencies to the period following Expo 67, when, faced with rising separatist inclinations in Quebec, many Canadians decided that our history was too contentious. He wishes that we had instead "redoubled our efforts to learn about the common democratic institutions and values that inform our society."

In *Who We Are*, he turns to two historical periods where, he believes, these institutions and values were formed by great efforts of nation building. These aren't the famous battles of Vimy Ridge or Juno Beach, or even the time of Confederation.

Rather, Griffiths points first to the years between the rebellions of 1838 and the creation of responsible government in 1848, and then, a century later, to the governments of Louis St. Laurent following World War II.

"What these two periods share," he says, "is their intention to create through the institutions of government and the state a sense of Canadian identity, and purpose, and direction for the

country that was a conscious act — kind of an assertion of a Canadian way that was neither British, nor American, but that was something unique and reflected the history of the country and its own social realities."

At those times, Griffiths says, "we had these very substantial conversations about who we were as Canadians, who we wanted to be as a people [and] came up with something that was uniquely our own."

Griffiths recognizes the challenges facing Canada in the twenty-first century, such as our uniquely high levels of immigration. But he notes that Canada also experienced very high levels of immigration in the past, and that we had the same types of debate and conversation about immigration.

"I think what our forebears can help us with is an understanding of the need to create the foundations, both in terms of shared values and shared institutions, that allow different ways of life and different perspectives to flourish," he says. According to Griffiths, the investment in public education was a key factor in overcoming regional, linguistic, and ethnic differences though a shared identity and common purpose.

"Canada always in a sense is a nation involved in a great, epic, historic piece of performance art. And through our history we have defined our identity through the national institutions that we have built together."

To listen to a podcast with Rudyard Griffiths, go to: TheBeaver.ca
To order this book, visit HistorySociety.ca/boo.asp

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RALPH LARSON

Album

Bart Nygard sent this photo from his home in North Vancouver, where he enjoys car collecting. His brother, Ernest Nygard, passed away in 2007.

Playing Dress-up

"Pony photographers" recorded children acting the role of cowboys for posterity. The one who took this picture of Bart Nygard and his brother Ernest led his pony from house to house looking for customers. His only equipment was a camera and the props visible in the photo — a pair of chaps, two bandanas, and a hat. The chaps were attached to the pony, Bart recalled, making the costuming process that much more efficient. This photo was taken around 1935 and shows Bart, age six, sitting on the pony, with Ernest, who was about ten.

The Nygard boys grew up in the community of Maillardville, a former lumber mill town located in Coquitlam, east of Vancouver. The town, which is celebrating its one-hundredth birthday this year, is one of the few French-Canadian communities west of Manitoba. It was established because of the lumber company's recruiting efforts in Eastern Canada. The town's main population was French-Canadian, however some people of Scandinavian origin also settled in the area. The boys' father, Viktor was a Swedish settler. Fraser Mills employed him all his life. The picture was taken outside the home Viktor was building for his family on Dawes Hill.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o, The Beaver, P.O. Box 56060, Portage Place RPO, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0G9. Or email your submission to album@thebeaver.ca. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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